THIRTEEN TRIVANDRUM PLAYS
ATTRIBUTED TO
BHĀSA

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THIRTEEN TRIVANDRUM PLAYS ATTRIBUTED TO

BHĀSA

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY

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CORRIGENDA

VOL. I

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7, note, *for pratisāra read pratisarā*
9, l. 27, *for* Yauganharāyaṇa *read* Yaugandharāyaṇa
62, l. 26, *for* Aruṇi *read* Āruṇi
76, l. 11, *for* wood-sorrel *read* a basket
note 1, *for* Suktankar *read* Sukthankar
115, l. 2, *for* Bhīsmaka *read* Bhīshmaka
130, l. 32, *for* Shiva *read* Śiva
149, l. 20, *for* Vishñu *read* Vishṇu
l. 30, *for* Bīma *read* Bhīma
150, l. 9, *for* Yudishṭhiva *read* Yudhishṭhira
note 1, *for dirghāyus read dīrghāyus*

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THE EMBASSY

(*Dūtavākyam*)

INTRODUCTION

After the wedding mentioned at the end of *The Five Nights* messages were sent between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus. No satisfaction being obtained from the Kurus, Kṛishṇa offers to go himself to make peace, if this be possible. (Mahābhārata LXII, *Bhagavadyāna-parvan* 73.)

After a discussion as to the tone he should adopt, he sets out. The old king Dhṛitarāshṭra advises an honourable reception of Kṛishṇa.

Duryodhana thinks it better to send him no presents. Bhīshma says Kṛishṇa's advice should be followed. Duryodhana says he cannot divide the kingdom with his enemies and wishes to have Kṛishṇa taken prisoner. This intention is disapproved by all. Bhīshma leaves the chamber in disgust. Kṛishṇa is received at Hastināpura by Dhṛitarāshṭra, Bhīshma, &c., and stays with Vidura. Then he enters the palace and is received by Duryodhana and the princes. Duryodhana asks him why he did not partake of viands sent to him. Kṛishṇa replies. It is because Duryodhana is at enmity with his boyhood's friends the Pāṇḍavas. Returns to Vidura's house, where he takes a meal. In the night Vidura tells Kṛishṇa the Kurus are set on war and that his words will be in vain. Kṛishṇa explains that nevertheless he must try. The next day he goes to Dhṛitarāshṭra's council, where he is greeted on all sides. He states that the Pāṇḍavas are ready to obey Dhṛitarāshṭra if they are accorded their rights. Some long stories are narrated by way of precedent or warning. Then (124) the old king says he cannot talk round Duryodhana, and Kṛishṇa had better try himself. Kṛishṇa speaks forcibly to Duryodhana and advises him to divide the realm with the Pāṇḍavas. Bhīshma, Droṇa, Vidura, and the old king try to induce the young prince to follow Kṛishṇa's advice. Duryodhana is determined to fight things out as beseems a warrior. Kṛishṇa answers with reproaches. Duryodhana and his brothers leave the assembly. Kṛishṇa advises that Duryodhana should be imprisoned and so peace could be maintained. Duryodhana is brought back by Vidura and lectured by Queen Gāndhārī, but he leaves the hall again and determines with Śakuni, Karṇa, and Duḥśāsana to capture Kṛishṇa.

Word comes of this, and the rebellious princes are summoned to the assembly and reproached by Dhṛitarāshṭra and Vidura. Kṛishṇa shows himself in his true form (131) and leaves the assembly. Dhṛitarāshṭra begs his pardon. After an interview with Kuntī, mother of the three elder Pāṇḍavas, Kṛishṇa takes leave of Bhīshma and the others, puts Karṇa on his car, and drives back to Upaplavya.

The Embassy compresses the story of Kṛishṇa's visit into a single Act. The wickedness of Duryodhana is emphasized and so is the divine power of Kṛishṇa. The old king appears only at the end to entreat Kṛishṇa's forgiveness. Before that, Duryodhana appears as the actual ruler, and he is represented as threatening to fine the princes if they rise to honour Kṛishṇa. The introduction of the painted scroll as part of the plan to insult the envoy is an invention of the dramatist. In the epic Kṛishṇa reveals his true form. In the play he is definitely identified with Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa, and Vishṇu. Moreover, Vishṇu's weapons are introduced, and the discus speaks at length about the others. There is nothing of this in the epic.

It should be noted with regard to these weapons that verses 51 and 52 appear to be alternative to 47, 48, 49. The discus has already dismissed the three weapons individually, and there is no point in their reappearing together.

One may go a step further and hazard the conjecture that all of this passage describing Vishṇu's weapons is by a later hand.

With verse 41 Duryodhana rushes from the assembly uttering threats. Then Vāsudeva converses with his discus, which itself talks to and about the other weapons. When the discus has gone, Vāsudeva says he must go, and the blind old king comes to stop him. The drama would lose nothing if after Duryodhana's exit (verse 41) Vāsudeva said 'I too must leave—for the Pāṇḍavas' camp', and the old king's voice was heard behind the scenes. 'No, no; he must not go.'

An interesting feature of this play is the way in which all the Kuru assembly is played by one actor—at least one man does all the talking; the rest could be imagined or indicated by a few supers.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager, in Prologue.
Chamberlain = Bādarāyaṇa.
DURYODHANA = eldest son of Dhṛitarāshṭra, leader of the Kurus.
VĀSUDEVA = Kṛishṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Vishṇu.
Sudarśana = Vishṇu's discus, one of his four weapons.
Dhṛitarāshṭra = the blind old king, father of Duryodhana and his 99 brothers.

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening*[1] *enter the Stage-Manager.*]

Stage-Manager. May Vishṇu's[2] foot protect you—the foot that brings joy to all the worlds; that with slender dark-red nails sent Namuci[3] whirling through the sky. (1)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you—But what is that? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Ho there, guardians of the gate! King Duryodhana commands.

Stage-Manager. Good. I understand.

As hostilities have arisen between the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra and the Pāṇḍavas, a servitor prepares the council-chamber at Duryodhana's command. (2)

[*Exit.*]

ACT I

[*Palace at Hastināpura.*]

[*Enter a Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Ho there, guardians of the gate. King Duryodhana commands. 'To-day will we take counsel with all the sovereigns. So let all the kings be summoned.' (*Stepping and looking around.*) Oh, here is King Duryodhana coming this very way.

A dusky youth in a white silk robe,[4] with anointed limbs beneath the royal parasol and chowrie. Splendid with limbs lit up by glistening jewellery, a full moon among the constellations. (3)

[1] Nāndī, see note vol. i, p. ix.

[2] Upendra. 'Younger brother of Indra', i.e. Vishṇu or Krishṇa.

[3] The demon Namuci is generally supposed to have been destroyed by Indra, or Indra and the Aśvins with the foam of sea.

[4] Sarup takes *dukūla* to mean 'silk'—following Apte's Sanskrit Dictionary. Kālidāsa has *cīnāṃśuka* ('Chinese cloth') for 'silk', but he also speaks of *dukūla*, which does not seem to be identical with *kṣauma* (linen made from flax). There are other kinds of silk in India besides that of the mulberry-eating silkworm introduced from China.

[*Enter Duryodhana as described.*]

Duryodhana. My heart it seems has dispelled its wrath in the joyful thought that this festival of battle has at last arrived. I long to mar the faces of the champion tuskers in the Pāṇḍava force by hacking out their ivory pestles. (4)

Chamberlain. Victory to the king! The whole body of kings has been assembled at your Majesty's command.

Duryodhana. Well done. You may retire within.

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

Duryodhana. My lords Vaikarṇa and Varshadeva,[1] I have a vast army of eleven divisions. Tell me, who is fit to be the Commander-in-Chief? What do you say?—'an important matter'—'opinion after due deliberation.' Quite so. Come, then, let us go into the council-chamber. Preceptor, my salutations; please enter the council-chamber. Grandfather, my respects; please go in. My lords Vaikarṇa and Varshadeva enter. And all ye warriors pray enter freely. Karṇa, my comrade, let us go in.

[*Entering the Council-Chamber.*]

Preceptor, this is the tortoise seat; please sit down. Grandfather, here is the lion seat; do you sit there. Uncle, there is the leather seat for you. Vaikarṇa and Varshadeva, pray sit down. And all you gentlemen take your seats as you will. What's that—the king is still standing? Aha! how loyal are you all. Well, well, I take my seat. Do you sit down also, Karṇa, my friend. (*Sits down.*) Tell me, my lords Vaikarṇa and Varshadeva, who is fit to be Commander-in-Chief of my vast army of eleven divisions?

What do you say?—'His Highness of Gāndhāra should speak first.' Very well, let my uncle have his say. What's that, uncle? 'Who else should be Commander while Ganges' son is there?'[2] Well said, uncle. So let it be. It shall be, grandfather. That is also our desire.

May the hearts of their chieftains sink as the consecrating water falls on Bhīshma's head, to the roar of the host, the rolling of the drums and the conch-shells' blare, loud as the thundering of the sea lashed to fury by a gale. (5)

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Victory to the king! Here is Nārāyaṇa, the best of men, arrived as an ambassador from the Pāṇḍavas' camp.

Duryodhana. Nay, not so, Master Bādarāyaṇa. What? Is Kaṃsa's

[1] There is no stage-direction for the entry of all these people. They do not speak themselves and are evidently to be imagined.

[2] Bhīshma, the son of Gaṅgā.

serving-man Dāmodara [1] your best of men? Is that cowherd thy best of men? Deprived of lands, reputation, and wealth by Bṛihadratha's son, is he thy best of men? What conduct is this for an attendant on the sovereign's person. What insolent words. Ha! to hell with you.

Chamberlain. Forgive me, Majesty, forgive me. In my confusion I forgot the proper etiquette. (*Falls at his feet.*)

Duryodhana. Confusion? Ah! men are liable to confusion. Rise.

Chamberlain. I thank you.

Duryodhana. Now I am satisfied. Who is this envoy that has come?

Chamberlain. An envoy has come, one Keśava.

Duryodhana. 'Keśava'; yes, that's the way to announce him. That's the proper etiquette. Tell me, Princes, what is the proper thing to do with Keśava, who has come as an envoy? What do you say?—'he should be received with honour'? That is not my opinion. Prison, I think, is the best place for him.

> If Kṛishṇa is made captive, the Pāṇḍavas will have lost their eyes. The Pāṇḍavas destitute of resource and counsel, the whole earth will be mine without a rival. (6)

What's more, if anyone rises to meet Keśava, I will fine him twelve gold pieces. So don't you be forgetting it. [*Aside.*] Now, how can I avoid getting up myself? Yes, I see a way. [*Aloud.*] Bādarāyaṇa, fetch me that scroll with the painting of Draupadī dragged by the hair and by her clothes. [*Aside.*] I can fix my eyes on that and need not rise for Keśava.

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Victory to the king! Here is the scroll.

Duryodhana. Spread it out before me.

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. [*Spreads it out.*]

Duryodhana. Oh! what a splendid picture. Here is Duḥśāsana. He has seized Draupadī by the locks of her hair. This is Draupadī—

> Rudely beset by Duḥśāsana, eyes staring wide in fright, she looks like the digit of the moon in the jaws of the demon of eclipse. (7)

Here is the evil-minded Bhīma. Seeing Draupadī insulted in the presence of all the princes, wrath swells within him, and he measures the pillars of the chamber. Here is Yudhishṭhira—

> Truthful, righteous, and compassionate, though his wits be lost in gaming, he tranquillizes Bhīma with sidelong glances. (8)

And here is Arjuna—

[1] *Dāmodara* means 'having a rope round one's waist', i.e. like a thief.

Lips quivering, eyes blurred with rage, he recks but a straw for that ring of foes, and, as if he would annihilate all those kings, softly draws Gāṇḍīva's string. (9)

Here is Yudhishṭhira restraining Arjuna.

[Here are Nakula and Sahadeva—

Girded up, with sword and buckler in their hands, their faces flushed and stern, biting hard their lower lips, they are free from fear of death. Fiercely they attack my brother like two fawns setting on a lion. (10)

Here is Yudhishṭhira approaching the princes and restraining them.][1]

'Tis I that have fallen low, with a mind perverse may be. How then? Do ye now lay aside your wrath, knowing right and wrong. Men too proud to bear defeat at the decision of the dice may find their prowess questioned by the brave. (11)

Here is the king of Gāndhāra—

The master gambler breaks into insolent laughter as he casts the dice, nipping his opponent's happiness in the bud with his own renown. Sprawling as he pleases, he leers at the weeping Draupadī, and skilled at the game scrapes the ground. (12)

Here are the preceptor and grandfather. Ashamed to see her in this plight they hide their faces in the end of their robes. How rich the colours are. What wonderful expression! A perfect scene—The picture is excellently painted. We are pleased. Who is there?

Chamberlain. Victory to the king!

Duryodhana. Ah, Bādarāyaṇa, bring in that envoy, so puffed up just because it is a bird he rides.

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

Duryodhana. Karṇa, my comrade—

Black-hearted Kṛishṇa has come here to-day as an envoy, like a hireling at the Pāṇḍavas' behest. Prepare thine ears, friend Karṇa, to hear the words of Yudhishṭhira, gentle as a woman's. (13)

[*Enter Vāsudeva and Chamberlain.*]

Vāsudeva. At the bidding of Yudhishṭhira, and from true friendship with Arjuna, I have taken on to-day the thankless role of envoy to Suyodhana,[2] so overbearing in war and catching at what one has not said.

The forest of the Kurus' family tree will be blasted in battle by the fierce gusts of Arjuna's arrows fanning flames of Bhīma's ire; his wrath is fired by the shaming of Draupadī, and ever

[1] Yudhishṭhira referred to twice. Perhaps v. 10 is a later addition.

[2] Euphemistic name of Duryodhana.

he bears the terrible mace to crush the broad foreheads of elephants in the foeman's host. (14)

This is Suyodhana's camp. Here indeed!

The king's pavilions are like celestial cities set up at heart's desire; vast armouries are crammed with weapons of every sort and kind; troops of fine horses are neighing in their stalls; elephants are trumpeting; all this opulent power is doomed to dissolution because of the flaunting of kin. (15)

Alas! This evil-speaking, virtue-hating rascal Suyodhana, ruthless to his kinsmen, will not do the thing he ought, even on seeing me. (16)

Bādarāyaṇa, am I to enter?

Chamberlain. Why, yes. Vishṇu [1] may be pleased to enter.

Vāsudeva. [*Going in.*] Why, what is this? On seeing me all the warriors are disturbed. Do not disturb yourselves; pray sit at ease.

Duryodhana. What's this? All the warriors are disturbed at the sight of Keśava. Stop moving now. Remember the fine that was proclaimed. I am master here.

Vāsudeva. [*Approaching.*] Ah, Suyodhana, how are you? [2]

Duryodhana. [*Falling off his seat. Aside.*] It's clear enough; Keśava has arrived.

Boldly I made up my mind and firmly I stuck to my seat.
But by Keśava's power I have soon fallen off. (17)

Ha! this is a tricksy messenger. [*Aloud.*] Here is a seat, Master Envoy. Pray be seated.

Vāsudeva. Preceptor, take your seat. Bhīshma and other princes, sit down at your ease. We too will sit. (*Sitting down.*) Oh, what a splendid picture! No, no! It is a painting of Draupadī being dragged by the hair and clothes. And here forsooth—

Here is Suyodhana. In his childishness he thinks the shaming of his kin a deed of valour. Who in the world is so lost to the sense of decency as to expose his own crime in an assembly? (18)

Oh, let that picture be removed.

Duryodhana. Take the picture away, Bādarāyaṇa.

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. (*Takes it away.*)

Duryodhana. Say Master Envoy—

Are they all in health, the son of righteousness, wine-begotten Bhīma, my cousin Arjuna, the son of the lord of gods and the

[1] Padma-nābha, 'lotus-naveled'. [2] Could also be 'Are you seated?'.

modest twins, the Aśvin's sons—are they and their people well? (19)

Vāsudeva. This is worthy of Gāndhārī's son. Yes, yes, all are well. And for the prosperity and health within and without of your realm and person the Pāṇḍavas, led by Yudhishṭhira, make enquiry, adding this message:

Great trouble have we endured; the time decreed is now fulfilled. So let the share be given of whatever inheritance is ours by law. (20)

Duryodhana. What inheritance?

My uncle once, hunting in the forest, did an evil deed. So he incurred the sage's curse. Thenceforth desire for his spouses left him. How shall there be patrimony for the sons of others? (21)

Vāsudeva. To you, so versed in family lore, I put this question.

Vicitravīrya the profligate was destroyed by wasting sickness. Then how did thy father Dhṛitarāshṭra, begotten by Vyāsa on Ambikā, succeed to the kingdom? (22)

Nay, do not make this claim.

In this way, by the waxing of mutual enmity, oh king, the Kuru race will soon be but a name. So restraining wrath, your highness should do what the Pāṇḍavas request with all affection. (23)

Duryodhana. Master Envoy, you know nothing of state affairs.

Kingship belongs to brave princes who defeat their foes. It never goes by begging in this world, nor by charity to the poor. Would they win sovereignty, let them join forthwith in battle, or else go as they will to seek peace in a hermitage inhabited by men of tranquil minds. (24)

Vāsudeva. Oh, Suyodhana! Speak not so harshly to your kin.

Though by store of merit one attains royal glory, yet should one cheat a kinsman or a friend all one's efforts are in vain. (25)

Duryodhana. Master Envoy—

Thou hadst no pity for King Kaṃsa, sister's brother of thy sire. Why should we feel pity for these our constant enemies? (26)

Vāsudeva. Do not think that was my fault.

Many a time had he brought sorrow on my mother by the loss of her sons, and imprisoned his own old father, so was he slain by death himself. (27)

Duryodhana. You cheated Kaṃsa in every way.

No self-praises now. That was no brave act. Look you,

when the Lord of Magadha blazed with wrath at the slaughter of his son-in-law—and thou didst flee sick with fear—where was thy bravery then? (28)

Vāsudeva. Suyodhana, the bravery of the politic regards the place, the time, the situation. So much then for our own pleasantry. Come now to my errand.

Show affection to thy cousins; forget their faults. An alliance made with kin is good for both the worlds. (29)

Duryodhana. How can there be kinship twixt mortal man and sons of gods? This is grinding what is ground. Enough, cut short the tale. (30)

Vāsudeva. [*Aside.*] Propitiated for peace he bates nothing of his haughty nature. Well, I must probe him with harsh and bitter words. (31)

[*Aloud.*] Suyodhana. Do you not know the might and prowess of Arjuna?

Duryodhana. Not I.

Vāsudeva. Hearken then—

To the Lord of Beasts in hunter's guise he gave his fill of fighting. When Fire consumed the Khāṇḍava wood a deluge of rain was held off by his arrows. The fiends in mail impenetrable, that harassed the Lord of Gods, he destroyed as if in sport. Single-handed he put Bhīshma and the rest to flight in the city of Virāṭa.[1] (32)

Again I will tell you something you witnessed yourself.

Visiting the herdsmen's stations thou wast carried off screaming to the sky by Citrasena and set free by Arjuna.[2] (33)

In short,

O son of Dhṛitarāshṭra, give half the kingdom at my demand, or else the Pāṇḍavas will seize the earth from sea to sea. (34)

Duryodhana. What's that? The Pāṇḍavas will seize it?

Though the Wind-God himself in Bhīma's form be smiting in the battle and Indra manifest in the shape of Arjuna, not a blade of grass will I give of my realm. My father held it, and with valour will we guard it for all thy words, thou champion in bitter speech. (35)

Vāsudeva. Disgrace of the Kuru house; seeker after shame. Are we talking of grass?

[1] As related in *The Five Nights*.

[2] Refers to Mahābhārata iii. liii. 236–57. *Ghoshayātrāparvan.* Citrasena was a king of the Gandharvas.

Duryodhana. Why, cowherd, grass is the stuff for you.

Having slain an innocent[1] maid, a horse and even a bull, and wrestlers too, oh shameless one, thou wouldst fain converse with the good. (36)

Vāsudeva. What, Suyodhana, are you mocking me?

Duryodhana. Nay, but that is true.

Vāsudeva. I shall withdraw at once.

Duryodhana. Go! Go to your stall with limbs white with the dust from the hooves of your cattle. Your time has been wasted.

Vāsudeva. So be it then. But we will not go without delivering the message. Hearken then to the message of Yudhishṭhira.

Duryodhana. Bah! You are not worthy to be spoken to.

Over me is borne the royal white umbrella, my head is sprinkled with holy water from the hands of the highest priests. I do not speak, I say, with men like thee, attendants of my vassal kings. (37)

Vāsudeva. Suyodhana, forsooth, holds no converse with me. Ha!

Thou cheat, ruthless to thy kin. Thou crow, thou squint-eyed yellow man.[2] The Kuru house shall come swiftly to destruction on account of thee. (38)

Princes, let us depart.

Duryodhana. How now? Keśava would be off. He has abused an envoy's privilege. Bind him, Duḥśāsana; and you, Durmarshaṇa, Durmukha, Durbuddhi, and Dushṭeśvara. What, are you weaklings? Duḥśāsana, are you helpless?

This Kṛishṇa murdered Kaṃsa, slew a horse and elephant. Bred in a family of cowherds, he is ignorant of etiquette. Devoid of strength and valour, he is guilty by his own mouth in the presence of princes. Straightway let him be bound. (39)

This man is a weakling. Uncle, do you bind this Keśava. What, he turns his face and falls down! Well, I myself will bind him with a noose. [*Advances with uplifted noose.*]

Vāsudeva. What! Suyodhana, forsooth, wishes to fetter me. Very well; I shall test his strength. [*Assumes his universal form.*]

Duryodhana. Master Envoy—

To-day am I going to bind thee, amid the host of kings, though thou makest thine own magic or magic divine all around, even though thou smitest with celestial weapons hard to parry—proud as thou art of the felling of elephant, horse and bull. (40)

[1] avadhyām, 'not to be killed'.

[2] Or *piṅgala* separately in the sense of 'ape' or 'snake', as L. S. would prefer.

Ah, stay now. How is it I cannot see Keśava? Here he is. How small he looks. Stay now. Why can't I see him? Oh, here he is. How tall he looks. He 's gone again. No, here he is. There are Keśavas all round the council-chamber. What shall I do? Yes, I have it. Princes, do each of you bind one Keśava. How now, they are falling down bound in their own bonds. Bravo, sorcerer, bravo!

The Pāṇḍavas will be sighing deeply, with eyes bedimmed with tears, when they see thee carried to their camp, wounded with a network of arrows sped by my bowstring, with every limb dyed with running gore. (41) [*Exit.*]

Vāsudeva. [Well, I shall accomplish the Pāṇḍavas' business myself. Come hither my discus Sudarśana.[1]

[*Enter the discus Sudarśana.*]

Sudarśana. Lo!

Hearing the voice of the Blessed One, by his bountiful favour forth do I rush, dispersing masses of clouds. With whom is he wroth, the Lotus-eyed. On whose head must I be manifest? (42)

Now, where is the blessed Nārāyaṇa?

Source of the subtle unseen transcending thought, the Majestic One of many forms, destroyer of enemies' power, he has risen to protect the world. (43)

[*Looking around.*] Ah, here is the Blessed One at the gate of Hastināpura acting as ambassador. Water now; where to find water. Blessed Ganges in the sky vouchsafe some water. Ah, it flows. [*Sips water and approaches.*] Hail, blessed Nārāyaṇa! [*Makes obeisance.*]

Vāsudeva. Sudarśana, matchless be your power.

Sudarśana. I thank you.

Vāsudeva. You have arrived luckily in the nick of time.

Sudarśana. What, in the nick of time? Command me. Blessed One, command me.

Shall I overturn all the Meru and Mandara mountains? Shall I convulse the whole ocean? Or hurl down to earth all the brood of stars? There is nothing I cannot do, O Blessed One, by thy favour. (44)

Vāsudeva. Ha, Sudarśana, come hither. And thou, Suyodhana, though thou hidest in the briny sea, or in the mountain cave, or in the track of winds traversed by starry hosts, to-day shall my disk, thou wanton, be the disk of thy death swiftly sped by the force of my arm. (45)

[1] See remarks in Introduction about these weapons.

Sudarśana. Ha, stay thou miserable Suyodhana.

[*Reflects.*] Pardon, blessed Nārāyaṇa.

Thou didst descend upon the earth, O God, to ease its burdens; if now this man should pass like this, thy trouble would be in vain. (46)

Vāsudeva. Sudarśana, in anger I forgot my duty. Return to your abode.

Sudarśana. As the blessed Nārāyaṇa commands. Who now calls him cowherd? He is indeed the Majestic Nārāyaṇa who covered the triple universe in three strides. Take refuge with him, O men. I shall go. Why, here is Śārṅga, the Blessed One's excellent bow.

Endowed with womanish qualities—lovely, soft, and slender—it is an unfailing death to hosts of foes, with its middle grasped by Vishṇu's hand. It gleams with its back set with gold at Kṛishṇa's side like a lovely streak of lightning on the edge of a darkling cloud. (47)

Ho, Śārṅga! The blessed Nārāyaṇa's wrath is appeased. Return to your own abode. Ah, he has gone. Now let me go too. Oh, here is the Club Kaumodakī.

Studded with gold and gems, wrapped in beautiful garlands, it yearns to crush the limbs of crowds of foemen to the gods. Shaped like a mountain peak, with prowess irresistible, it comes rushing swiftly through the sky, followed by a mass of clouds. (48)

Ho, Kaumodakī! The blessed Nārāyaṇa's wrath is appeased. Ah, she has gone. Now let me go. Why, here comes the conch-shell Pāñcajanya.

Deliciously white as the rounded moon, as jasmine blossom or the centre of a lotus flower, graced by Kṛishṇa's lotus face,[1] its murmuring recalls the roaring of the ocean when the world returns to chaos. At the sound of it the demon dames miscarry. (49)

Ho, Pāñcajanya! My master's wrath has passed away. So back to your abode. Away he goes. Now there is the sword Nandaka.

Slender as a woman but in battle dreadful as a mighty demon, it flashes through the sky gleaming like a meteor. (50)

The master's wrath is appeased, O Nandaka. Away with you. He has gone; now I must go.]

[Why, here are the divine weapons of the Blessed One.

[1] When he blows it.

Here is the sword named Nandaka mocking the burning sun with its rays, and here Kaumodakī, so skilled in smashing the gnarled bosoms of the gods' enemies. And that is Śārṅga the long bow, whose string twangs with the thunder of clouds at the end of the world. This is Pāñcajanya, king of conch shells, deep-toned and moonbeam-bright. (51)

Ho Śārṅga, Kaumodakī, Pāñcajanya, and thou Nandaka, the death of demons, a fire to burn thine enemies? The anger of the Blessed One has been appeased, so go ye now each to thine own abode. (52)

Ah, they have gone. Now I must go.

Why, what a violent wind; how fiercely the sun is burning. The mountains rock, the seas are agitated. Trees are uprooted and clouds are scurrying. Mighty serpents like Vāsuki hide away. What does it all mean? Ah, here comes Garuḍa, my master's steed divine.

The nectar which the gods and demons gained by toil he snatched from his foe to set his mother free, and bestowed this boon on Kṛishṇa to serve him as his mount. (53)

O Garuḍa, the darling son of Kāśyapa, the wrath of the blessed Lord of Gods is appeased. Return to your abode. Ah, he has gone. Now must I go too.

Here are the gods and other folk divine[1] crowding the sky with crowns falling from their heads in their haste. With Vishṇu wroth they lost their beauty and their power, but hearing he is pacified they return to their abodes relieved from anguish. (54)

Now I too will return to my favourite recess in Mount Meru. [*Exit.*]]

Vāsudeva. I too must leave—for the Pāṇḍavas' camp.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

No, no, he must not go.

Vāsudeva. That sounds like the old king's voice. I am still here, O King.

[*Enter Dhṛitarāshṭra.*]

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Where now is the blessed Nārāyaṇa? Where is the benefactor of the Pāṇḍavas? the friend of brahmans? the delight of Devakī?[2]

By reason of my son's offence, O Wielder of the Śārṅga bow, do I lay my head at thy feet, Ruler of the Gods. (55)

[*Falls at his feet.*]

[1] Lit. according to the restored reading, 'Siddhas, Yakshas, and Kinnaras'.
[2] Mother of Krishṇa.

Vāsudeva. Alas, your Majesty prostrate! Pray rise.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. I thank you. Blessed One, pray accept these tokens of our welcome.[1]

Vāsudeva. I accept everything. What further favour can I bestow?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. If the Blessed One is pleased, what more can I desire?

Vāsudeva. Farewell till we meet again.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. As the Blessed Nārāyaṇa commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Epilogue.*]

This earth, that extends to the ocean with the Himālaya and Vindhya mountains as ear-drops, may our Lion King rule over her, marked with the symbol of a single sovereign sway.[2] (56)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

FINIS.

[1] Lit. 'this (water) for respectful reception and for the feet'.

[2] Identical with the Epilogue in *The Vision of Vāsavadattā*.

POTSHERD AS AN ENVOY

(*Dūta-Ghaṭotkacam*)

INTRODUCTION

ABHIMANYU, the son of Arjuna, was married to Uttarā, the daughter of Virāṭā. That was the conclusion of *The Five Nights*. Later on, in the course of the great battle, Abhimanyu ventured into the fray alone, was set on by a number of his enemies, and slain.

This was a tragic moment of horror. A mere youth had been overpowered and killed by a number of experienced warriors. That youth was the Pāṇḍava heir, and kinsman of the Kurus. A terrible vengeance by Arjuna became absolutely inevitable.

In this play we see the old blind king, Dhṛitarāshṭra, protesting against the wickedness of Abhimanyu's death. The story of his undoing is revealed by the soldier. Then come the wicked prince Duryodhana and his associates Duḥśāsana and the gambler Śakuni. They are delighted at the slaying of Abhimanyu, and Duryodhana argues the matter with his old father. An envoy comes from Kṛishṇa. This is Potsherd (Ghaṭotkaca), Bhīma's son by a demon mother, Hiḍimbā, whom we saw in *The Middle One*.

Courteously received by the old king, he is taunted by Duryodhana. They quarrel, and Potsherd is ready to fight. Pacified by the old king, Potsherd delivers his message, which is a threat of vengeance by Arjuna, and departs.

Abhimanyu's death is described in the seventh book of the Mahābhārata (vii. 48, 49), Section lxxiii being called *Abhimanyuvadha-parvan*. Karṇa deprives Abhimanyu of his car and bow. All the Kurus fight with him at once. Abhimanyu flies into the air, but is followed by his enemies' arrows. He comes to earth again and attacks Droṇa with a wheel. When the wheel also is destroyed he seizes a mace and kills many of his foes. Finally, Duḥśāsana's son kills him with a blow of a mace on his head.

Later on (vii. 73, in lxxiv *Pratijñā-parvan*) Arjuna takes an oath that he will kill Jayadratha next day or burn himself. (Jayadratha was a son-in-law of the old king, husband of Duḥśalā, and King of Sindhu-Sauvīra.)

Section lxxv, *Jayadrathavadha-parvan*, describes how Arjuna fulfilled his oath, assisted by Kṛishṇa's magic. There is no embassy at this stage and nothing about Ghaṭotkaca. Nor was Dhṛitarāshṭra on the scene of the battle. This has been noted in the Introduction to *The Broken Thighs.*

In this play, as in *The Embassy*, there is no action but the taunting of an envoy and his departure in indignation. The dialogue brings out the tragic situation and the doom impending for the Kurus. The piquancy of the scene depends partly on Duryodhana's defiance of Kṛishṇa, who is Nārāyaṇa, that is already, as in *The Embassy*, the god Vishṇu himself.

On the whole this is rather a sketch than a drama.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In the order of their appearance.)

Stage-manager, in the Prologue.
Soldier, on the Kuru side.
DHṚITARĀSHṬRA, the blind old king, father of Duryodhana, and the other Kurus.
Gāndhārī, his wife, who bandaged her eyes.
Duḥśalā, his daughter, wife of Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu-Sauvīra.
Portress.
DURYODHANA, eldest son of Dhṛitarāshṭra, leader of the Kurus.
Duḥśāsana, one of Duryodhana's 99 brothers.
Śakuni, the gambling king of Gāndhāra.
POTSHERD, GHAṬOTKACA, son of Bhīma and Hiḍimbā, sent as an envoy by Kṛishṇa.

PROLOGUE

[After the Opening enter the Stage-manager.]

Stage-manager. May Nārāyaṇa protect you.

Nārāyaṇa, the sole refuge of the three worlds, who determines what expedients are proper for the gods; stage-manager [1] of the main plot, prologue,[2] and epilogue of the ceaseless drama of the triple world. (1)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you. But what is that? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[Voice behind the scene.]

Ho there, take word, take word, I say!

Stage-manager. Good, I understand. A band of confederates enticed Arjuna [3] away with Kṛishṇa.[4] Forthwith, on that, the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, enraged at the slaying of Bhīshma, surrounded Abhimanyu and killed him. So—

The kings afeared of Arjuna's return, watching the quarter whence he'd come, fly to their own leaguers, distracted by the wounds inflicted by arrows of Subhadrā's son. (2)

[Exit.]

END OF PROLOGUE.

[Enter a Soldier.]

Soldier. Take word, take word, I say to his Majesty Dhṛitarāshṭra, that hath worthy kin and a hundred sons, far-sighted with his virtue and piety, amplified by knowledge.

Though but a boy playing in the battlefield, Abhimanyu displayed his father's prowess and dismayed the royal forces by slaying warriors, chariot steeds, and elephants; then hundreds of princes rushed swiftly upon him from all sides, and he has been sent straightway to his grandsire's bosom in the sky.[5] (3)

[Enter Dhṛitarāshṭra, Gāndhārī, Duḥśalā, and Portress.]

[1] *Sūtradhāra*: originally one who 'held the strings' and made the puppets dance.

[2] *Prastāvanā*, not *sthāpanā*, the term used in these plays for prologue.

[3] Dhanañjaya.

[4] Janārdana.

[5] Reading with editor *sarvataḥ khe yātasya*. Lit. 'has been, as it were, suddenly caused to mount the lap of his grandfather gone (already) in the sky'.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Oh, what is this I hear?

Who is it offends mine ears? Who utters hateful news thinking it would please me? Who is it dares proclaim the ruin of our house, stained by the crime of killing a child? (4)

Gāndhārī. There it is again, your Majesty. It is absolutely clear this fratricidal war can only end in the destruction of our children.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Now it will be clear, Gāndhārī.

Gāndhārī. When, my lord?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. To-day, Gāndhārī. Listen,

Arjuna[1] will be at work to-day, furious at Abhimanyu's death, with his dread bow beside him, while angry Kṛishṇa holds the reins and whip. There will be peace when all the world is dead. (5)

Gāndhārī. Alas! Abhimanyu, my grandson, whither hast thou gone now, plunging thy childhood to our misfortune in such a fratricidal war that destroys the best of warriors?

Duḥśalā. The man that inflicted widowhood on our son's wife Uttarā has ordained widowhood for his own young wife.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. But who has built this bridge to a flood of woe?

Soldier. Sire, 'twas I.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Who are you?

Soldier. Sire, I am Jayatrāta.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Jayatrāta—

Who has slaughtered Abhimanyu? To whom is life no longer dear? Who has made himself the fuel for the fivefold fire of the Pāṇḍavas? (6)

Soldier. Sire, several kings rushed on him at once and slew Prince Abhimanyu. It may be Jayadratha did the actual deed.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. What? Jayadratha did the deed?

Soldier. Even so.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Alas! Jayadratha is as good as slain.

[*Hearing this Duḥśalā begins to cry.*]

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Who is that crying?

Portress. Sire, it is the princess Duḥśalā.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Do not weep, my child. Look you—

Your constant freedom from a widow's state no longer satisfies your lord, so he needs must make himself the mark for Arjuna's[2] arrows. (7)

Duḥśalā. Then permit me, father, I'll go to my daughter-in-law Uttarā.

[1] Pārtha. [2] Gāṇḍīvī, the owner of the bow Gaṇḍīva.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. What will you say to her, my child?

Duḥśalā. I shall tell her, father, that for to-day and for ever I too will don widow's weeds like her.

Gāndhārī. Dear daughter, don't say such unlucky things. Your husband is still alive.

Duḥśalā. Oh, mother, no such luck for me. Who can live that has offended Arjuna and Kṛishṇa?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Poor[1] Duḥśalā is right. For—

Who in the world can long survive his own misdeeds if he has slain the child that grew up in Kṛishṇa's lap, pillowed on his eight arms—the darling of the Pāṇḍavas—brave as the gods, while the love of him was a second intoxication for the excited Wielder of the Plough? (8)

Jayatrāta, when Arjuna saw his son brought to that pass, what did he take on him to do?

Soldier. What, sire? You think this happened in Arjuna's presence?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Why, was Arjuna not there?

Soldier. Oh, no.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. How did it happen?

Soldier. Hearken, sire. A band of confederates enticed away Arjuna with Kṛishṇa. Then Prince Abhimanyu, in his youthfulness, seeing no harm in it, joined in the battle.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Alas, naturally he was killed. Who can venture into a cave frequented by a tiger? But what are the other Pāṇḍavas doing?

Soldier. Hearken, sire—

They do not place the body on the pyre themselves, that Arjuna may see it, but repeat the names of the kings that dealt blows thereon. (9)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Come along, Gāndhārī. We will go to the bank of the Ganges.

Gāndhārī. Why, Majesty, to bathe therein?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Gāndhārī, listen—

Even to-day will I make oblation for thy sons slain by their own offences. Yet have I no power by my gifts of water to check the princes in their camp. (10)

[*Enter Duryodhana, Duḥśāsana, and Śakuni.*]

Duryodhana. My dear Duḥśāsana—

By the death of Abhimanyu enmity is established firmly, victory attained, our foes bewildered and driven off. Madhu-

[1] Reading *tapasvinī*.

sūdana's[1] arrogance is uprooted. To-day have I won both success and fame. (11)

Duḥśāsana. Yes, indeed.

The sons of Pāṇḍu were held back. Jayadratha's force overcame the enemy and slew Subhadrā's son,[2] a second Arjuna, with a flight of a hundred shafts. We were in straits through Bhīshma's fall, but in this battle we have planted sharp darts of sorrow in their hearts by the slaughter of their son. (12)

Śakuni. In the fight to-day Jayadratha did mighty deeds. The princes found his valour past belief. By his prowess in the battle he robbed them at once of their son and matchless fame. (13)

Duryodhana. Uncle.

Śakuni. Yes, my boy?

Duryodhana. Come hither, uncle; and you, my dear Duḥśāsana. Let us salute his Majesty, my father.

Śakuni. Nay, not so, my dear Duryodhana.

This war in the clan does not suit his liking. His fondness for the Pāṇḍavas will make him reproach us. Indeed is it seemly for us fresh from victory in the battle to approach him thus with jubilant faces? (14)

Duryodhana. Nay, uncle. Come what may, we shall salute his Majesty, our father. (*Steps around.*)

Duryodhana. Father, I salute you; 'tis I, Duryodhana.

Duḥśāsana. Father, I am Duḥśāsana. I salute you.

Śakuni. I am Śakuni. I salute you.

All three. What! is not a word of blessing vouchsafed to us?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. How can there be a blessing, my son—

When Abhimanyu, but a boy, the very heart of Arjuna and Kṛishṇa, has been slain? How may one pronounce a blessing on the lives of those past hope. (15)

Duryodhana. Oh, father, what has caused this agitation?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. What has caused this agitation?

In this house, rich in many sons, there was but one daughter, dearer to me than a hundred sons. She, thanks to you, her kinsmen, will gain inglorious widowhood. (16)

Duryodhana. What's wrong with Jayadratha?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. That gallant warrior held back the Pāṇḍavas.

Duryodhana. Oh! he held them back? So did many others.

[1] Kṛishṇa. [2] Abhimanyu.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Alas!

When so many rushed together ruthlessly and fell upon one, a child, my grandson, why were their arms not paralysed? (17)

Duryodhana. Father—

Why were their arms not paralysed when they slew old Bhīshma with their tricks? And why should ours for slaying one that was no stripling in his prowess? (18)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. My son, can you compare the fall of Bhīshma to the slaying of Abhimanyu?

Duryodhana. Why not, father?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Listen, my son.

Bhīshma's death depended on his own will. He was cut down in accordance with his own advice, well content. But this was a child, and in him is cut off the lord to be of the Kuru house and Arjuna's first-born. (19)

Duḥśāsana. Father, that child of yours was no child, Abhimanyu.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Is that Duḥśāsana speaking?

Duḥśāsana. Why, yes.

While all of us were looking on and fighting he grasped a bow as hot as Indra's thunderbolt[1] and wounded all the kings with arrows, like the sun discharging a network of rays. (20)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Alas!

If that child, Subhadrā's son,[2] has worked such havoc all alone, what, think you, will Pārtha[3] do, enflamed by the destruction of his son? (21)

Duryodhana. What will he do?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Those of you that survive will see what he will do.

Duryodhana. But, father, what after all is this Arjuna?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Do you not know Arjuna, my son?

Duryodhana. Not I.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. So then, nor do I. But there are many that do know the strength and valour of Arjuna. Ask them.

Duryodhana. Who are these people, father, who know Arjuna's strength and valour, that I should ask?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Hearken, my son—

Do thou ask Indra,[4] honoured aforetime by gifts of demon[5] mail and demon lives. Ask Śiva, in his Kirāta guise, pro-

[1] Reading *vyādhāmoṣmaṁ* with editor. Or perhaps, as he suggests, *vyādhāmoṣmāgṛhya*?

[2] Abhimanyu.

[3] Arjuna.

[4] Śakra.

[5] Nivāta—usually 'impenetrable'—also a class of demons.

pitiated with every kind of weapon. Ask Agni, who longed for serpent offerings and was surfeited in the Khāṇḍava wood. And the divine magician that defeated you to-day—ask Citrāṅgada. (22)

Duryodhana. If that is all it comes to, the valour of Arjuna, are no warriors in our army a match for him?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. If so, who?

Duryodhana. Well, there's Karṇa.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Ah! Poor Karṇa is ridiculous.

Duryodhana. Why so?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Listen—

Careless and soft-hearted, he shares a chariot, though Indra has removed his armour;[1] his weapons have lost their power, as he got them by fraud. Karṇa, forsooth, will be equal to Arjuna, if Fire, Indra, and Rudra teach him the gift of weapons. (23)

Śakuni. You have the right to belittle us.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Is that Śakuni speaking? Ah! Śakuni—

That work of yours, inveterate gambler, was a consuming fire of enmity for this house, that spares not even saplings.[2] (24)

Duryodhana. Oho!

Whence comes it that the earth is trembling all at once with a rumbling roar and the sky seems all ablaze with falling meteors? (25)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. I think, my son,

'Tis clear. These meteors that fall are the teardrops of mighty Indra, distressed to see his grandson slain. (26)

Duryodhana. Jayatrāta, go and find out the reason of this noise in the Pāṇḍava camp with all the din of war-cries, conchs, and kettledrums.

Soldier. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] When Arjuna returned from his encounter with the confederate warriors he placed his dead son on his lap and bathed him in tears. Then egged on by Kṛishṇa's taunts he made a vow . . .

Duryodhana. What is this?

Soldier. With hearts content with his resolve, elated by his prowess, the princes looked at him with beaming faces and suddenly broke forth into a roar of 'Victory'; and the earth, bestrid by kings, like heavy mountains piled together, trembled at that moment like a maiden in confusion. (27)

[1] Described in *Karṇa's Task*.

[2] Lit. 'that is not quenched in the case of children (or young plants)'.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. The earth trembled at the mere sound of his oath. 'Tis clear that when he touches his bow the triple world will totter. (28)

Duryodhana. What was the oath?

Soldier. The man that slew my son and those that rejoiced at his death—them will I slay to-morrow ere the sun goes down.[1] (29)

Duryodhana. I shall make an effort to thwart his oath.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. What will you do, my son?

Duryodhana. I shall cover Jayadratha with all the mass of my armies. Moreover—

In accord with Droṇa's rules I shall draw up a battle array in a form that none can penetrate. With broken hopes and desires ungained let them enter funeral flames with warriors, elephants, and all. (30)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Though he burrow in the earth, though he climb the firmament, everywhere will those arrows follow him, the arrows of Kṛishṇa's comrade.[2] (31)

Soldier. Had any other spoken thus to our ruthless king, ever ready in command, he would not be living now. (32)

[*Enter Potsherd* (*Ghaṭotkaca*).]

Potsherd. Here I am—

Faring forth to see that ignoble-minded foe that urged the death of Abhimanyu; obeying the command of the discus-wielder like a lordly elephant urged by the goad to its food. (33)

[*Looking down.*] This is the entrance to the enemies' camp. I will get down. [*Gets down.*]

I will announce myself.

Hiḍimbā's son am I, Ghaṭotkaca, come with a message from the Yadu king. I am to see that aged prince involved in hostility by the faults committed by his kin.

Duryodhana. Come, come, enter your enemies' camp. My curiosity is great. Let me hear Kṛishṇa's audacious words. I, Duryodhana, am waiting. (34)

Potsherd. [*Entering.*] Ah! here is his Majesty King Dhṛitarāshṭra. He has a fine appearance, gentle and grave.

Wonderful, wonderful!

Old though he is, there are no marked wrinkles, and his shoulders are compact.[3] His fortitude seems to lend his form

[1] Reading *svara* with editor.

[2] Lit. 'of him that has Kṛishṇa as his eye'.

[3] Reading doubtful. For *śutrasaṃhatāṃsaḥ* the editor reads *śata*—'a hundredfold'.

the confidence of his five score sons. The gods, I think, were apprehensive of the protection of the triple world, and through their fear his Majesty was created blind.[1] (35)

Grandfather. Ghaṭotkaca salutes you. Nay, rather, it is my elders, Yudhishṭhira and the rest, salute you, then afterwards I, Ghaṭotkaca.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Come hither, my son.

This is no pleasant tale [2] for me, for my heart too is wrung by thy brother's fate. And thus this thy message does not suit. I am brought to misery by the misdeeds of my sons. (36)

Potsherd. Oh! Your Majesty is a noble soul. The Blessed One, the Wielder of the Discus, sends word to my grandfather, offspring of a noble stock . . .

Dhṛitarāshṭra. [*Rising from his seat.*] What are the commands of the blessed Wielder of the Discus?

Potsherd. No, no. Take your seat to hear the message of Janārdana.[3]

Dhṛitarāshṭra. As the blessed Discus-wielder commands. [*Sits down.*]

Potsherd. Grandfather, listen—'Oh, my child Abhimanyu, the light of the Kuru clan, alas! my child, my child, the scion of the Yadu house! Thou has left Janārdana, thy mother's brother, and even me and gone to heaven with the hope of seeing thy grandsire.' 'If such is the plight of Arjuna at the loss of one son, what will be yours, grandfather? So, quickly now, muster all your strength lest the fire rising from grief for your sons burn your life as an oblation.' Thus he spake.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. So spake Kṛishṇa [4] with an angry purpose. I seem to see Arjuna enduring when all other warriors have been slain. (37)

Duryodhana. Oh! What a ridiculous speech.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Do you find it so?

Duryodhana. Ridiculous indeed.

That jealous Kṛishṇa must be plotting with the gods if he believes a host of kings will be slain by Arjuna single-handed. (38)

Potsherd. Thou mockest. I am an envoy sent by Kṛishṇa. But 'twas meet to let thee hear what Arjuna had done. (39)

Besides, you must hear Janārdana's message.

Duḥśāsana. Not so, you despiser of the warrior caste. No other message shall be heard in the presence of this commander, whose orders are obeyed by all the princes on the earth. (40)

[1] The idea reoccurs in *The Broken Thighs*, v. 36.

[2] Reading *priyākhyānam*, suggested by editor.

[3] Kṛishṇa or Vishṇu.

[4] Cakrāyudha, 'whose weapon is the discus'.

Potsherd. What's that? Is Kṛishṇa then no king for you? Ho!

Kṛishṇa set free the kings with humbled pride from Jarāsandha's city[1]; Kṛishṇa won the prize[2] from Bhīshma's hand while all the ring of princes gazed in envy; Kṛishṇa has Fortune herself as mistress in his chamber,[3] radiant to serve him. Is this wonderful king of kings no king to thee? (41)

Duryodhana. Duḥśāsana, no more discussion.

Be he king or no king, be he strong or weak, what's the need of many words? What has your master said? (42)

Potsherd. Why, yes. August Nārāyaṇa is indeed the master, the lord of the universe, and especially our master. Besides—

Understand the destruction of thy warriors is determined—may the earth be the lighter for the piled-up corpses[4] of a hundred kings. For in the forefront of the fray nothing will be too hard for Arjuna, made eager by the loss of his son, to discharge his terrible bolts. (43)

Śakuni. Could it be done by words alone, the world were won! Were it by words and nothing but words, the killing of the warriors were done! (44)

Potsherd. Bah! Here is Śakuni having his say. Ho! Śakuni—

Abandon dice, and in the fighting be thou a chequer board, so suitable for thee and a ready mark for arrows. For here are no women to steal, no throne to usurp. Here the stake is life, and enjoyment means arrows with their dreadful winnings. (45)

Duḥśāsana. If you say 'Bah!' to us,

Thou tauntest us, and speakest rough words beyond all limit. Long in the arm, thou reekest nothing of what thou sayest. If thou art proud and hast a dreadful form from thy mother's side, we too are grim with natures fierce as demons. (46)

Potsherd. Heaven forbid! You are much worse than demons.

The spirits of the night do not burn their brothers asleep in a house of lac; the spirits of the night do not touch that way the head of a brother's wife, and the spirits of the night do not

[1] Reading *jarāpurān nṛpalayaḥ*, as suggested by editor. Jarāsandha was king of Magadha and Cedī, an enemy of Kṛishṇa. Gaya was his city. For the freeing of the kings by Kṛishṇa see M.Bh. ii. 24, in *Jarāsandhavadha-parvan*.

[2] Reading *yenārghaṃ* for *yenāghaṃ*, referring to M.Bh. ii. 36, *Arghāharaṇa-parvan*. Editor suggests *yenārdham*—'half', i.e. 'wife', Rukmiṇī.

[3] Reading *śrīr yasya* for *śrīvṛkṣa*. (Ed. śrīvatsa.)

[4] *viniciti*.

celebrate the slaughter of a child in the battlefield. Though they be strange in form and fierce in manner they are not devoid of pity. (47)

Duryodhana. As an envoy hast thou come, not to fight. Take thy message and go. We are not of those that slay an envoy. (48)

Potsherd. What, would you throw it in my teeth that I am an envoy? Nay, then, I am no envoy.

A truce to your trickery. Fall on me all together. I am not Abhimanyu, made helpless by the cutting of a bowstring. (49)

This has been my great wish from boyhood.

Further—

Here stands Ghaṭotkaca, biting his lips with fists upraised; let any man stand up to me that wishes to go to the abode of Death. (50)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Ghaṭotkaca, my grandson, pardon, pardon. Respect my words.

Potsherd. I cannot restrain my anger. Yet, at grandfather's word, I am again an envoy. What am I to announce to the august Nārāyaṇa?

Duryodhana. Announce from whom? From me you may tell him,

Why so many useless words? We are not to be vanquished by harsh words.[1] No word goes far when a man must fight. I am coming out, surrounded ever by the umbrellas in line of a hundred kings. Wait there with the Pāṇḍavas. I'll give you an answer with my arrows. (51)

Potsherd. Grandfather, I am going.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Go, my grandson, go.

Potsherd. Hearken, ye kings, to the final message of Janārdana—

Do what is right. Have regard for thine own kin. Fulfil upon this earth whatever thy heart desires. For in the guise of Pāṇḍavas, as if to teach your clan the truth, Death will come upon you with the rays of to-morrow's sun. (52)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

FINIS.

[1] Reading *pāruṣya* for *pauruṣya*.

KARṆA'S TASK

(*Karṇa-bhāram*)

INTRODUCTION

THIS one-act play has a tragic note. It might almost be called 'Karṇa's Tragedy' or 'How Karṇa drove to his death', for that seems to be what is meant.

Karṇa, the king of Aṅga, was a son of Kuntī, and therefore a half-brother of the elder Pāṇḍavas. During the great battle he was sent out specially to fight with Arjuna. He feels that against his half-brothers he cannot do himself justice, that his weapons have lost their force.

Sūrya (the sun) was Karṇa's father, and Karṇa was born with armour and golden ear-rings. In the third book of the Mahābhārata (*Sections 300–310 Kuṇḍalā-haraṇa-parvan*) we are told that Sūrya appeared to Karṇa in a dream and warned him not to give away his armour and ear-rings, which made him invincible, if Indra should come in the guise of a brahman and ask for them. Karṇa says he will give them; better to die than to injure his reputation by a refusal. Then Sūrya warns him he should at least get the unfailing lance in return. Indra (310) appears and demands the armour and ear-rings. Karṇa agrees if he gets the magic lance. This will kill only one enemy.[1] He hacks the armour off his body. The eighth book of the Great Epic is called the *Karṇaparvan*. Karṇa takes over the chief command of the Kuru army. He undertakes to fight with Arjuna, if Śalya will drive his car.

Śalya dislikes this subordinate position, but agrees provided he may say what he likes to Karṇa.

Śalya and Karṇa mount the car and drive against the foe (36). They have a long quarrel.

Śalya points out evil omens, and shows him Arjuna and Kṛishṇa in the fight. Karṇa fights with the Pāñcālas and kills five of them. Yudhishṭhira stuns Karṇa, but Karṇa disarms him, captures him, and lets him go with scornful words. The battle rages with varied fortunes. Finally (86 onwards) Karṇa and Arjuna come together for their duel, and Arjuna (91) shoots his head off.

[1] In vii. 179, Karṇa uses up the lance to Kṛishṇa's glee in killing Ghaṭotkaca.

Our dramatist simplifies the story. Karṇa sets out with Śalya for the fight with Arjuna. Three times he tells Śalya to drive his car where Arjuna is, and the play ends abruptly on that command. All the while he is oppressed by impending disaster. 'There falls on my heart black misery.' He is held back by his mother's word. He tells Śalya the story of a curse upon his weapons, that they will fail him in time of need. But he is resigned, for in battle 'Slain one goes to heaven, victorious one wins glory'. 'Good luck to me whose time has come.'

After this colloquy they mount again, but Indra comes disguised as a brahman and obtains the magic armour. Instead of demanding the invincible spear in exchange, Karṇa receives it with reluctance. (This Karṇa is throughout more saintly than the epic Karṇa.) Then for the third time they mount the car and drive where Arjuna's conch is sounding.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager, in the Prologue.
Soldier, on the Kuru side.
KARṆA, King of the Aṅgas, son of Sūrya by Pṛithā (or Kuntī before her marriage to Pāṇḍu), and so an elder half-brother of the Pāṇḍavas, but fights on the Kuru side.
ŚALYA, King of the Madras, brother of Mādrī, the second wife of Pāṇḍu, fights on the Kuru side and drives Karṇa's chariot.
INDRA, disguised as a brahman. Speaks Prākrit like a mendicant of an unorthodox order, e.g. Buddhist or Jain.
Angel, disguised as a brahman: a messenger from Indra.

PROLOGUE

[*After the Opening enter the Stage-manager.*]

Stage-manager. May the Fortunate[1] bring you good fortune—he that smites the hosts hostile to the gods. The sight of him in his man-lion form scared the world and underworld, with all the multitudes of men and women, gods,[2] and fiends. 'Twas he that burst the breast of the demon-king with the axe-edge of his nails. (1)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you—But what is that? I thought I heard a noise just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Ho there, take word to his Highness the King of the Aṅgas.

Stage-manager. Good, I understand.

A flurried servitor with folded hands brings word to Karṇa at Duryodhana's behest that the battle grows tumultuous. (2)

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE PROLOGUE.

[*Enter a Soldier.*]

Soldier. Ho there, take word to his Highness the King of the Aṅgas—'it is time for battle'.

Princes, brave as lions, on elephants, chargers, or chariots, are roaring lion-like before the Pāṇḍu[3] standard. Perceiving what is at stake, the serpent-bannered champion of the world has set out hurriedly for the battlefield, unbearable with the enemies' yells. (3)

[*Stepping round and looking off.*]

Ah! here is the Aṅga king accoutred for the battle, coming hither from his house with King Śalya. But, oh! what means this unwonted anxiety in one that is foremost in the joys of battle and of proven valour? For he—

Counted first in battle, manifest with the fiercest majesty, goes now a wise man sadly to the fray. Karṇa now is like the sun,

[1] *Śrīdhara*—possessing fortune, name of Vishṇu.

[2] Reading *suparva* with the editor for *suparṇa*.

[3] *Pārtha*, matronymic from *Pṛithā*.

when summer comes, obscured by lines of clouds but shining with its innate splendour. (4)

Well, I must be off. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Karṇa with Śalya as described.*]

Karṇa. Nay, then, have the kings that came as targets within my arrow's range ever returned alive? In the van of the fight to-day I should please the Kurus if I could meet with Arjuna.[1] (5)

King Śalya,[2] drive my car where Arjuna may be.

Śalya. Very well. [*Drives the car.*]

Karṇa. My prowess is a match for cruel death, and yet in the hour of battle, in mighty fights, with charging warriors, elephants, steeds, and cars, with limbs lopped off in the ruin dealt by blades on either side, there falls on my heart black misery. (6)

Alas!

In days gone by I was born of Kuntī,[3] though now I'm known as the son of the charioteer.[4] So Yudhishṭhira and the other Pāṇḍavas are my younger brothers. (7)

This is the glorious hour come at last; this is the excellent day of days, but my weapons and all that I have learnt of war are all in vain as I am held back by my mother's word. (8)

O Madra King, hear the story how I learned the art of war.

Śalya. I am very curious to hear it.

Karṇa. First I went to Jāmadagni.[5]

Śalya. Yes?

Karṇa. To that excellent sage I went, that standard of the Bhṛigu race, that destroyer of the warrior class, with a mass of matted locks long and tawny as streaks of lightning, wielding an axe flashing rings of lustre—humbly I saluted him and stood resolute at his side. (9)

Śalya. What then?

Karṇa. Then Jāmadagni blessed me, and asked me who I was, and why I had come.

Śalya. And then?

Karṇa. Your Reverence, I said, I wish to learn the use of every kind of weapon.

[1] *Dhanañjaya*, the great archer.

[2] *Śalya-rāja*; but Śalya was king of the Madras.

[3] Kuntī, the mother of the three elder Pāṇḍavas.

[4] Rādheya, i.e. the son of Rādhā, the wife of Adhiratha, the charioteer and foster-mother of Karṇa.

[5] Son of the Ṛishi Jamadagni.

Śalya. What did he say?

Karṇa. The holy man said he would teach brahmans only, not warriors.

Śalya. Yes, he has an ancient feud against the warrior clans. What then?

Karṇa. Then I told him I did not belong to the warrior class and began to receive instruction in the art of weapons.

Śalya. And after that?

Karṇa. A few days later I went with my teacher to fetch some fruit and roots, and some fuel, with grass and flowers. Then wandering in the wood my teacher was tired and fell asleep with his head in my lap.

Śalya. Proceed.

Karṇa. By ill chance an insect called 'steely-teeth'[1] bored through both my thighs. Afraid of disturbing my teacher's slumber I endured the pain with fortitude. Awaking in a stream of blood, he found me out and straightway blazed into fiery wrath and cursed me, saying, 'Useless be thy weapons in the time of need'. (10)

Śalya. Oh! That was a dreadful thing for the sage to say.

Karṇa. Now let us examine the condition of our arms. (*Does so.*) These weapons all seem to lack power. Moreover—

These horses stumbling helplessly along blinded by misery, these elephants reeking like the Seven-leaf tree with excitement, they are all heralds of disaster in the battle. (11)

Conchs and kettledrums are silent.

Śalya. Oh, this is frightful!

Karṇa. Be not dismayed, King Śalya.

Slain, one goes to heaven, victorious one wins glory. The world thinks much of either, so one must win something in a battle. (12)

Besides—

These steeds as swift as Garuḍa, born of splendid Kāmboja stock, though they have no hope of returning from the war, shall protect me, albeit past protection.[2] (13)

Endless prosperity to kine and brahmans.

Good fortune to faithful wives. Good luck to warriors that do not turn their backs in battle. Good luck to me whose time has come. Well, I am glad.

I shall penetrate the Pāṇḍava van, so intolerable, capture

[1] *Vajramukha*, 'of adamantine mouth'.

[2] Reading *rakṣantu mā yadyapyarakṣitavyam.*

Yudhishṭhira, far-famed for wealth of virtue, and overthrow Arjuna by the force of my mighty shafts. So that all may enter as in a wood where the lions have been slain. (14)

Come, Śalya, let us mount the car.

Śalya. Very well. [*They gesticulate mounting the chariots.*]

Karṇa. Now, Śalya, drive me where Arjuna may be.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

O Karṇa, I beg for a mighty boon.

Karṇa. [*Listening.*] Oh, what a powerful voice!

Not merely a good brahman he, but a noble gentleman, and hence this great impression. These galloping horses of mine stop suddenly, their slender frames out of control, when they hear his deep sweet voice, as if painted in a picture. They prick their ears, and slightly arch their necks, strung with beads, and rub them with their muzzles. (15)

Call up the sage. No, no, I will call him myself. Reverend sir, come hither.

[*Enter Indra, disguised as a brahman.*]

Indra. Back, ye clouds, return with the sun. [*Going up to Karṇa.*] O Karṇa, I beg for a mighty boon.

Karṇa. I am very glad, holy man.

To-day I shall be counted among those that have gained their end. This is Karṇa that salutes you, his lotus feet illumined by the diadems of mighty monarchs, but his own head purified by the dust from the feet of a great sage. (16)

Indra. (*Aside.*] Nay, what am I to say? If I say 'Long life to you' he will live long. If I say nothing he will despise me as a fool. So I must avoid both extremes, but what shall I say? Good, I have it. [*Aloud.*][1] O Karṇa, eternal as the sun, the moon, the Himālayas, and the ocean be your fame.

Karṇa. Should you not say, sir, 'Long life to you!'? However, that is an auspicious wish. For—

Virtue should a man attain by trying, a king's fortune flickers like a serpent's tongue. So if he fix his thoughts on protecting his people, good qualities endure, though bodies be slain. (17)

What would you have, holy man? What can I give you?

Indra. I beg for a mighty boon.

Karṇa. A mighty boon will I bestow. Hear what wealth I have.

If it please thee, worthy priest, I will give thee a thousand kine.

[1] In his own person, i. e. to himself, Indra speaks Sanskrit. In his assumed character of a religious he speaks Prākrit.

Young kine right fit for supplication and to purify, with horns tipped with gold—kine that after contenting all their calves give streams of excellent milk like nectar. (18)

Indra. A thousand cows? I drink but little milk. I don't want them, Karṇa.

Karṇa. You do not want them? Well, listen again.

I will give thee straightway several thousand chargers of fine Kāmboja stock, equal to the horses of the sun; bringers of luck to kings, esteemed by all princes; horses as swift as the wind, with no vice, and seen at their best in battle. (19)

Indra. Horses? I ride but little. No, I don't want them.

Karṇa. No? Then listen to this.

I will give thee that countless herd of elephants, with white nails and tusks, with black bees all round the ichor streaming down their temples—elephants that resemble a range of lofty hills, roaring deep like thunderclouds. (20)

Indra. Elephants? I ride but little. I don't want them, Karṇa.

Karṇa. You don't? Well, listen. I will give you countless gold.

Indra. I'll take that and go. [*Goes a few steps.*] No! I don't want it, Karṇa.

Karṇa. Then I will conquer the earth and give you that.

Indra. What should I do with the earth?

Karṇa. Then I will give you the fruits of a burnt sacrifice.

Indra. What's the good of a burnt sacrifice to me?

Karṇa. Then take my head.

Indra. Ugh! Ugh!

Karṇa. Don't be alarmed. Forgive me, holy man. Listen again.

My body armour was borne with my limbs, nor god nor fiend can pierce it with their weapons. Yet will I gladly give it thee, with both the ear-rings, if it please thee. (21)

Indra. [*Joyfully.*] Yes, give me that.

Karṇa. [*Aside.*] So that's what he wants. Now, could this be a trick of wily Kṛishṇa's? If it be, so be it. Fie, it is unbecoming to think so. There is no reason for suspicion. [*Aloud.*] Take it.

Śalya. O King of the Aṅgas, do not part with it.

Karṇa. King Śalya, do not prevent me. Look you—

Learning comes to nought in course of time. Firmly-rooted trees are thrown down. Even in reservoirs water is dried up. But gifts and oblations last for ever. (22)

So take it. [*Cuts off the armour and gives it to the sage.*]

Indra. [*Taking the armour. Aside.*] I have them. Now have I done

what the gods decreed aforetime for Arjuna's victory. So shall I mount Airāvata [1] and witness the mighty combat between Arjuna and Karṇa. [*Exit.*]

Śalya. King of Aṅga, you have been cheated.

Karṇa. By whom?

Śalya. By Indra.

Karṇa. Not at all; I have cheated Indra. For—

I have contented Indra, that punished Pāka,[2] and destroyed hosts of Dānavas—Indra, who possesses Arjuna, whose hands are rough from patting the celestial elephant, while the twice-born have to propitiate him with the oblations of innumerable sacrifices. (**23**)

[*Enter an Angel disguised as a brahman.*]

Angel. Karṇa, Indra is grateful to you and regrets taking your armour and ear-rings. So he sends this spear, named Vimalā, an unfailing weapon to slay one of the Pāṇḍavas. Pray accept it.

Karṇa. O fie! I do not take a return for a gift.

Angel. Nay, take it at a brahman's bidding.

Karṇa. At a brahman's bidding? That have I never disregarded. When shall I get it?

Angel. When you bring it to mind.

Karṇa. Very well. I thank you. You may return.

Angel. So be it. [*Exit.*]

Karṇa. King Śalya, let us mount the car.

Śalya. Very well. [*They gesticulate getting into the chariot.*]

Karṇa. Ah! I hear some noise. What can it be?

'Tis the sound of a conch like the roar of the ocean at the end of the world. Can it be Kṛishṇa's? No, it is Arjuna's. With his heart enraged by Yudhishṭhira's defeat, he will fight to-day with all his strength. (**24**)

King of the Śalyas, drive my car where Arjuna may be.

Śalya. Very well.

EPILOGUE.

Be there good fortune everywhere, may misfortune disappear for ever. May our King alone, endowed with royal virtues, rule the earth! (**25**)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

FINIS.

[1] Airāvata, name of Indra's elephant. [2] A demon.

THE BROKEN THIGHS

(*Ūrubhaṅgam*)

INTRODUCTION

The great battle of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas culminated in the duel between the gigantic Bhīma and Duryodhana, the champion of the Kurus. They fought with maces. Bhīma was all but defeated when with a mighty effort he struck a foul blow and broke Duryodhana's thighs. This play is the tragedy of Duryodhana's defeat and death.

In the Mahābhārata there is a section called *Gadāyuddha-parvan* (LXXXII in the IXth Book). Duryodhana (32) challenges the Pāṇḍavas to a single combat. Yudhishṭhira agrees, but Kṛishṇa says he has made a mistake. Nobody can defeat Duryodhana in an honest fight. Bhīma defies Duryodhana. Baladeva comes to see the fight and the two champions fall upon each other (34).

After a digression the story goes on (55). All repair to Samanta-pañcaka. Bhīma and Duryodhana face each other; the princes make a circle round them. The champions abuse each other and fall to with their maces (57). Duryodhana breaks Bhīma's coat-of-mail. Kṛishṇa tells Arjuna that Bhīma cannot win by honest fighting. Then Arjuna slaps his left thigh, so that Bhīma sees him. Bhīma smashes Duryodhana's thighs (58). Bhīma scorns the fallen warrior and mishandles him. Yudhishṭhira restrains Bhīma and speaks solicitous words to Duryodhana. Baladeva blames Bhīma for breaking the law of fighting. Kṛishṇa holds him back and argues the point. Baladeva is not convinced; he praises Duryodhana and promises Bhīma a bad reputation. He takes himself off.

Kṛishṇa approves what has happened and congratulates the king on regaining the realm. Warriors praise Bhīma. Kṛishṇa advises them to go home and reviles Duryodhana. Duryodhana raises himself half-way up and abuses Kṛishṇa for his cunning. Kṛishṇa answers with repeated reproaches. Duryodhana congratulates himself that he has had the greatest loss on earth and will now go to heaven. Heaven indicates its concurrence. All are depressed at this, but Kṛishṇa assures them that their powerful opponents could not have been killed in lawful warfare, and dismisses them to their homes (61). They go to the Kuru camp. Kṛishṇa is sent to Hastināpura to conciliate Gāndhārī. He

endeavours to console Dhritarāshtra and Gāndhārī and then returns. When the remaining Kurus hear what has happened they seek out Duryodhana. Aśvatthāmā swears he will destroy the Pāñcālas. At Duryodhana's command Kripa brings a vessel of water and Aśvatthāmā is consecrated to the command of the army. The three Kurus leave Duryodhana and depart. The next section is called *Sauptikaparvan* (X. LXXIII) and describes the night attack on the Pāṇḍava camp. At the end of it Duryodhana expresses his satisfaction and goes to heaven.

It will be obvious on reading this play that our dramatist represents the story in a very different way from that in the epic.

First we may note a feature of the construction of the play. There is only one act with as many as sixty-six verses, but this is introduced by an Interlude or Introductory Scene (*Vishkambhaka*), in which three soldiers (*bhaṭa*), reciting verses in turn, give us a description of battle, of the battle-ground, and of innumerable corpses. Then they tell us of the fight with maces between Bhīma and Duryodhana, that Bhīma is struck down, and Duryodhana taunts him. Then that Krishṇa makes a secret sign, striking his own thigh; that Bhīma with a mighty effort and with both his arms hurls the mace on his opponent's thighs. Bhīma is led away by the Pāṇḍavas and Balarāma is very angry.

This long description of what is happening reminds us of the three priests describing the sacrifice in *The Five Nights*, and, to a lesser degree, of the descriptions of the fight in the same play.

Baladeva opens the next scene, and Duryodhana crawls in with both thighs broken. Baladeva threatens vengeance, but Duryodhana, the wicked prince, shows a saintly resignation.

Then the dramatist brings on to the field of battle the old blind king Dhritarāshtra and his devoted wife Gāndhārī, who, according to the epic story, were miles away at Hastināpura. With them come two queens of the fallen prince and his little son.[1] There is a poignant passage, with the boy attempting to climb on his father's knees. All this has been invented. Duryodhana preaches reconciliation to his son and looks for death.

Aśvatthāmā, the son of the old preceptor Droṇa, enters and declares he will slay the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana attempts to dissuade him, but he swears he will do it by a raid at night. Baladeva bears witness to the oath. Aśvatthāmā declares Durjaya the heir to the kingdom. (By the compact the realm should go to the Pāṇḍavas and Aśvatthāmā was made commander in the epic.) Then Duryodhana is satisfied. He has

[1] There is nothing about a son of Duryodhana in the epic. Another Duryodhana was the son of a Durjaya.

a vision of his ancestors, which recalls the old king's death in *The Statue Play*,[1] and he dies. They cover him with a cloth.

As we have seen, Duryodhana in the epic died after the night raid, and between his wounding and his death showed a much fiercer spirit.

This death on the stage is remarkable—it has been introduced deliberately, though not in place according to the story, to round off the tragedy. It is against the canons of orthodox Sanskrit dramaturgy. Whoever be the author, we have here a tragedy written for the Indian stage.

Does it date from a time before the convention was fixed, or does it represent a defiance of that convention at a later date? If the play were ancient, it might be expected that later editors would try their hands in adding descriptive verses of their own. This might account for minor inconsistencies.

[1] Compare also the death of Vālin in *The Consecration.*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager
Assistant of the Manager } in the Prologue.

Three Soldiers of Duryodhana's army, who describe the battlefield and then the duel with maces.

Baladeva or Balarāma, the wielder of the Plough (Halāyudha), elder brother of Kṛishṇa.

DURYODHANA, eldest of the hundred sons of the blind king Dhṛitarāshṭra, leader of the Kurus.

Dhṛitarāshṭra, the old blind king.

Gāndhārī, his wife, who wore a bandage on her eyes.

Mālavī, one of Duryodhana's Queens.

Pauravī, another of Duryodhana's Queens.

Durjaya, Duryodhana's young son.

Aśvatthāmā, son of the old preceptor Droṇa.

PROLOGUE

[*After the Opening enter the Stage-manager.*]

Stage-manager. May the Lord Keśava ferry you over a flood of enemies, as he ferried Arjuna over the torrent of his foes—a torrent gravelly with blades and shafts, with Bhīshma and Droṇa as the guiding banks; wherein the King of Sindh presents the river-water, Gāndhāra's king a whirlpool, and Aṅgas' king a wave; a stream with Droṇa's son as alligator, with Kṛipa as a crocodile, and with Duryodhana as the tearing current. (1)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you—But what is that? I thought I heard a noise just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voices behind the scene.*]

Oh! Here we are, here we are!

Manager. Good. I understand.

[*Enter an Assistant.*]

Assistant. Where do these people come from, Master?

Officers are rushing to and fro, touchstones of each other's valour, ready to sacrifice their persons in the van of battle for the sake of heaven. Their limbs are jagged with a hundred arrows and javelins, their bodies chiselled by the tusks of raging elephants. (2)

Manager. Don't you understand, my lad? Duryodhana is the sole survivor on the side of Dhṛitarāshṭra bereft of a hundred sons and wisdom. On Yudhishṭhira's side only the Pāṇḍavas and Janārdana remain. Kurukshetra's plain [1] is strewn with the corpses of kings.

Here is a picture crammed with soldiers and kings, horses and elephants slain in battle; the drawing seems confused. The combat of Bhīma and Suyodhana begins. Their warriors have entered the one house of death for lords of men. (3)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE PROLOGUE.

[1] Sāmantapañcaka, the place in Kurukshetra where Paraśu-Rāma (Rāma with the axe) is said to have slain the Kshatriya race.

INTERLUDE

[*Enter three Soldiers.*]

All together. Oh! here we are, here we are!

First Soldier. We have arrived at the hermitage called battle, the home[1] of hostility and touchstone of valour. This is the abode of pride and glory. This is where warriors assemble to be chosen as bridegrooms by the nymphs of heaven. This is the place of manly prowess, a hero's couch for the death of kings, a burnt sacrifice of lives, a prince's bridge to heaven. (4)

Second Soldier. You speak truly.

The ground is rugged with heaps of elephants' corpses like huge boulders. On every side are vultures' nests. Chariots are empty of their champions. Kings of the earth have gone to heaven; yet such deeds have they done face to face in the battle, where all are busy with death, that they are not killed, though slain long since. (5)

Third Soldier. It is even so.

The battle rite proceeds; a sacrifice, where warriors fall as victims, and roars, as of lions, supply the sacred chanting. In that rite, lit with the fire of hostility, sacrificial posts are seen in the trunks of elephants, sacrificial grass in the litter of arrows, the woodstack in the pile of slaughtered tuskers and in the floating banners, the celestial cars. (6)

First Soldier. Look you on this other side.

Kings lie heaped upon the battleground bereft of life by each other's shafts, and these birds with blood-stained beaks loosen the ornaments from their bodies. (7)

Second Soldier. An elephant arrayed and ready for battle is overthrown by the force of a shower of arrows and sinks down with armour broken, like a royal arsenal, with bows and arrows. (8)

Third Soldier. Here's another thing, look you.

As women-folk help a daughter's husband down from the car, so do eager jackals drag down the dead warrior from the front of the chariot with his jewelled quiver, and a necklace of skulls made of garlands fallen from the top of banner poles. (9)

All together. Oh! How frightful is this battleground, Sāmantapañcaka. The ground is soaked with the blood of horses, men, and elephants,

[1] Reading *Āyatanam*.

wounded and slain. There is a confused mass of torn mail, skins, umbrellas, chowries, javelins, arrows, spears, and armour mixed with headless trunks, and a litter of every sort of weapon—pikes and darts, spears [1] and cross-bolts,[2] spikes and maces, hammers, boars' ears,[3] lances, arrows, swords, and clubs.

First Soldier. Here, indeed.

Rivers of blood are crossed by bridges of elephants' corpses. Steeds draw chariots devoid of princes, whence the charioteers have fallen. When heads are severed, trunks rush on by force of habit. Maddened elephants without a rider are wandering everywhere. **(10)**

Second Soldier. Again, see this.

Vultures, with tawny eyes as big as arrac seeds, with beaks as sharp as goads,[4] and huge long wings outspread, gleam in the sky like fans, with bits of flesh for coral. **(11)**

Third Soldier. The earth shows clearly all around in the pitiless rays of the sun slaughtered warriors and kings, elephants and chargers; it seems to support a host of fallen stars, covered as it is with darts and lances, arrows, javelins, and swords. **(12)**

First Soldier. Even in such a plight warriors do not lose their splendour but look magnificent. For here—

Kings' faces, free from fear, represent a still lotus of the land; their eyes turned up once for ever are the swarming bees, their dark red lips supply a multitude of shoots; their knitted brows pourtray the curving filaments; raised aloft on arrow stalks in the van of battle they sleep unstirred by the sun of valour. **(13)**

Second Soldier. Death prevails over even such warriors as these. It is impossible for less fortunate men to support the power of a king.

Third Soldier. What, then—does death prevail over warriors?

First Soldier. No doubt of it.

Second Soldier. Nay, say not so.

'Twas Arjuna to-day that perforce did introduce to Death those proud and insolent kings with arrows remaining from his fierce fight with Śiva, Arjuna twanging his bow in the van of battle, with the string blackened by the smoke of the Khāṇḍava forest, that bow that destroyed the sworn

[1] *Hāṭaka*, 'a golden spear'.

[2] *Bhiṇḍipāla* (also *bhindipāla* and other spellings), a missile shaped like a pestle and tipped with iron.

[3] Omitting *kaṇaya*, meaning unknown. (? shot).

[4] Lit. 'With beaks as sharp as the bent goad of the elephant of the Demon King'.

confederates,[1] sacrificed the life of demons in impenetrable armour, and removed the distress of heaven. (14)

All Together. Aha! a sound.

Is it thunder in the clouds? Are mountains being powdered by a flight of thunderbolts? Or is the earth being torn asunder by convulsions reverberating with tumultuous roar? Or is it the roaring of the sea, seething with a multitude of billows lashed into wild fury by the wind and breaking against the caves in the cliff of Mandara? (15)

Well, let us see. [*All step round.*]

First Soldier. Ah! here has begun the duel with maces between the middle Pāṇḍava, Bhīmasena, furious at the dragging of Draupadī by the hair, and the emperor Duryodhana enraged at the slaughter of a hundred brothers. Dvaipāyana, Halāyudha, Kṛishṇa, Vidura, and the other worshipful chiefs of the Kuru and Yadu races are looking on.

Second Soldier. Bhīma's chest, broad as a slab of burnished gold, is struck a violent blow. Duryodhana's muscular shoulders, hard as the trunk of Indra's elephant, are torn open. Weapons cling betwixt and beside their two arms. And with it all there goes up the din made by the violent strokes of the maces. (16)

Third Soldier. Here is the Emperor.

His crest is quivering with a skilful shake, his face and eyes are swollen with rage, his body dwarfed as he approaches crouching, and his hands held high aloft. The mace uplifted in his right hand and soaked with his enemy's blood shines like Indra's thunderbolt resting on the highest peaks of Mount Kailāśa.[2] (17)

First Soldier. Behold the Pāṇḍava with limbs besmeared with blood from mighty blows.

The blood gushes from his broken forehead, the points of each shoulder are shattered; his huge chest is drenched in gore running in streams from his wounds. Sorely wounded and bleeding from strokes of the mace, Bhīma shines like the mountain Meru with its boulders dyed by streams red with minerals. (18)

Second Soldier. He hurls the dreadful mace. He roars as he leaps aside; he quickly lifts his arm and parries the other's stroke.

[1] Trigarta and his brothers who took an oath to slay Arjuna but perished themselves.

[2] Reading doubtful.

He takes a forward step[1] and strikes without remission. The king is well trained, but Bhīma is the stronger. (19)

Third Soldier. Bhīma[2] now,

Matchless in battles, huge as a mountain, with a deep cut on his head drenching his limbs with blood, sinks on the earth like Golden Peak, the king of mountains, struck by a thunderbolt, and running with ruddy ores dislodged. (20)

Seeing Bhīma falling, his limbs loosened by a blow of the mace, Vyāsa stands amazed, his face upturned resting on a single finger.

Second Soldier. Yudhishṭhira is dismayed, Vidura is blinded with tears.

Third Soldier. Arjuna is fingering the Gāṇḍīva bow, Kṛishṇa is gazing at the sky.

All Together. Bala-rāma,[3] a spectator of the battle, from love of his pupil brandishes his plough. (21)

First Soldier. Here the Emperor,

Abiding place of valour, his crest flashing with many a jewel, endowed with pride and dignity with majesty and fortitude, speaks a word in mockery. 'Fear not, Bhīma, no hero smites a foe prostrate in battle.' (22)

Second Soldier. Now seeing Bhīmasena ridiculed, Kṛishṇa makes a secret sign striking his own thigh.

Third Soldier. That sign has comforted the Wind God's son.[4]

Knitting a frown[5] on his forehead, wiping away the sweat, then grasping his mace 'Citrāṅgadā' with both hands, with strength renewed by the Wind God,[6] who saw his son prostrate, he rises once more from the ground roaring like a lion-bull. (23)

First Soldier. Oh! the duel with maces has begun again.

The son of Pāṇḍu rubs his palms upon the ground, bites his lips with intense force, roars with furious rage and with a swift long sweep of both his arms—forgetting love of righteousness, forsaking rules of war, but following Kṛishṇa's sign—he hurls the mace on Duryodhana's thighs. (24)

All Together. Alas! the Emperor has fallen.

Third Soldier. Seeing the Kuru king falling with limbs bled white, the Blessed Vyāsa[7] has risen to the sky.

[1] Cārī, 'a step in dancing , M. W.

[2] Vṛikodara 'Wolf-belly'.

[3] Rāma here equals Balarāma, also called Halāyudha, having a plough as a weapon, the elder brother of Kṛishṇa, also called Baladeva.

[4] Bhīma was said to be the son of Vāyu.

[5] Reading *bhrūkuṭīm.*

[6] *Sarvagati.*

[7] Dvaipāyana. According to the Epic he was not present.

Lightly covering his eyes Balarāma shuts out the view. Bhīma sees the Wielder of the Plough has shut his eyes in anger on Duryodhana's behalf, and at Vyāsa's bidding is led away by the startled Pāṇḍavas in their hands enlaced, while Kṛishṇa supports his steps. (25)

First Soldier. Why Balarāma with eyes closed in anger, has perceived the flight of Bhīmasena and comes this very way. Here he is,

His lovely crest in disarray, his eyes dilated red with rage, he draws up a little way the garland bitten by bees. Dragging the garments hanging loose on his dark[1] body he looks like a moon with a halo descended to the ground. (26)

Second Soldier. Come let us attend on the Emperor.

The other two. Very well, a good suggestion.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Baladeva.*]

Baladeva. Ho, ye kings! this is not right.

Unmindful of my plough—that is death to the force of foes, recking nothing, in his pride, of me or the violation of the law of battle, he hurled that mace on Duryodhana's thighs in the forefront of the fight, bringing him low with the fortune of his house. (27)

Duryodhana, live on a little while,

Till to-day on the broad chest of Bhīma, ripely wet with sweat and blood, I make my plough groan as it furrows heavily through that field. To that ploughshare still cling remains of Saubha.[2] It was a hook for the high rampart of the great Asura city, a guide to Yamunā's waters, appeased by the oblations of countless foemens' lives. (28)

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Be merciful, blessed Wielder of the Plough, be merciful.

Baladeva. Even in this plight the wretched Duryodhana follows me.

He is glorious, his lustre smeared wet with blood, the sandal-paste of battle. Arms dusty white from crawling on the ground, he has taken an infant's role. He is like Vāsuki[3] set loose from the mountain by gods and demons, when the nectar-

[1] *Asita.* But Balarāma is said to have been fair. Sarup thinks *pāriveṣī* means 'wrapped in clouds'.

[2] Saubha, aerial city.

[3] Vāsuki, the serpent twisted round the mountain Mandara at the churning of the ocean.

churning was complete; abandoned and exhausted it drags its coils in the ocean waters. (29)

[*Enter Duryodhana with both thighs broken.*]

Duryodhana. Here, alas, am I,

Both thighs crushed with a mace-blow by Bhīma, who has broken the law of fighting, crawling on the ground with my two arms I drag along my body half extinct. (30)

Be merciful, blessed Wielder of the Plough, be merciful.

For the first time to-day my head falls at thy feet, myself fallen on the earth. Quench thy wrath. Victory to the funeral clouds[1] of the Kuru race. An end has come to our hostility, to the reason of the war, and to ourselves. (31)

Baladeva. O Duryodhana, live on a little while.

Duryodhana. What are you going to do?

Baladeva. Listen,

To thy warriors slain in battle with chariots, elephants, and horses and faring to heaven, I will give the sons of Pāṇḍu, their bodies furrowed by my ploughshare hurled upon them, their hearts and shoulders torn asunder by pestle blows. (32)

Duryodhana. Nay, say not so,

Bhīma has fulfilled his vow, my hundred brothers have gone to heaven, myself have come to such a pass, Balarāma. What can war do now? (33)

Baladeva. He tricked you before my eyes. That has made me angry.

Duryodhana. You think that I was tricked?

Baladeva. No doubt of it.

Duryodhana. Alas! My life it seems is the price I pay.

Bhīma had the wit to extricate himself from the dreadful house of lac all ablaze. In the battle in Kubera's abode he matched the onrush of mountain rocks. He it was that took the life of Hiḍimba, the lord of giants. If you think that Bhīma has vanquished me to-day by a trick, why, Balarāma, he has not beaten me. (34)

[**Baladeva.** Having tricked you in the fight is Bhīmasena to survive?

Duryodhana. What, was I tricked by Bhīmasena?

Baladeva. Why, what brought you to this plight?

Duryodhana. Hearken—

He that defied Indra and likewise stole his coral tree, he that for a whim slept a thousand celestial years in the ocean waters, 'twas he, Hari, the darling of the world, with his innate love of

[1] *nivāpa-meghāḥ.*

battle, that suddenly entered into Bhīmas sharp mace and gave me over to death. (35)][1]

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Out of the way, sirs, out of the way.

Baladeva. (*Looking off.*) Ah! here comes his majesty Dhṛitarāshṭra led by Gāndhārī and Durjaya, and the ladies of the palace are with him. His heart is overcome with grief.

He is a mine of fortitude, the sight of his eyes distributed among a hundred sons. Upstanding in his dignity, his long arms are like the golden pillars of the sacrifice. At his birth the gods misdoubted them of protecting heaven and smote his eyes with a handful of malignant darkness. (36)

[*Enter Dhṛitarāshṭra with Gāndhārī, two Queens and Durjaya.*]

Dhṛitarāshṭra. My son, where are you?

Gāndhārī. My child, where are you?

Queens. Where are you, my lord?

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Alas!

To-day when I heard of my son struck down in the battle by a trick, my blind face was made still blinder by the tears streaming in my eyes. (37)

Gāndhārī, are you still there?

Gāndhārī. Still bound to life, unhappy that I am.

Queens. Oh! Majesty, alas!

Duryodhana. Woe is me, even my queens are wailing.

Before that I hardly felt the pain of the mace's blow, but now I have it fully, when my women folk come into the field with their tresses exposed to view. (38)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Gāndhārī, can you see that champion of our house, Duryodhana?

Gāndhārī. Majesty, I do not see him.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. What, not see him? Now am I cursed by fate[2] that I cannot see my son at the time of need.

Proud of begetting a hundred sons, wise and brave, splendid in pride and valour, destruction to the enemies' ranks, does Dhṛitarāshṭra not deserve to have a funeral oblation scattered on the ground by one of his sons at least? (39)

Gāndhārī. Suyodhana, my child, answer me, and his unhappy majesty bereaved of a hundred sons.

[1] Seems to be a later addition.

[2] Reading the nominative for *kṛtānta-ataka*. but perhaps a word is omitted after *adyāsmi*. 'Now am I (unfortunate) that... Oh, wretched fate.'

Baladeva. Ah! Queen Gāndhārī!

Her eyes never yearned to see the faces of her sons and grandsons, but now her fortitude is exhausted by grief at Duryodhana's downfall. She wears the bandage on her eyes—symbol of devotion to her lord, but now it is ceaselessly wetted with her tears. (40)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Duryodhana, my son, sovereign commander of eighteen divisions—where are you?

Duryodhana. A fine sovereign to-day!

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Eldest of five score brothers—answer me.

Duryodhana. I'll tell you another story! How this business shames me!

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Come, my son, and greet me.

Duryodhama. Here I come. [*Makes as if to rise but falls again.*]

Alas! this is a second blow. Alack! To-day when Bhīmasena seized me by the hair [1] and hurled his mace, he did not rob me of my thighs alone, but also of the salutation to my father's feet. (41)

Gāndhārī. Here, my daughters.

Queens. We are here, lady.

Gāndhārī. Seek out your husband.

Queens. I go, unhappy.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Who is it leading me, pulling the hem of my robe?

Durjaya. 'Tis I, grandpa, Durjaya.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Go and look for your father, Durjaya.

Durjaya. I am so tired.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Run along, you can rest on your father's knees.

Durjaya. I am off, grandpa. [*Approaching.*] Daddy where are you?

Duryodhana. Oh, he has come too. Come what may, my love for my boy is close to my heart, and now it burns me? For,

Innocent of sorrows, eager to rest on my knees, what will Durjaya say when he sees me vanquished? (42)

Durjaya. Here is the king, sitting on the ground.

Duryodhana. Why have you come, my son?

Durjaya. You were away so long.

Duryodhana. Ah me! even in this plight my heart burns with love of my boy.

Durjaya. I'll sit on your lap. [*Tries to climb on to his knees.*]

Duryodhana. [*Preventing him.*] O Durjaya, Durjaya, alas!

This crescent moon, delight of my eyes and heart's delight, by change of circumstance becomes a burning fire. (43)

[1] Not consistent with verses 23 and 24.

Durjaya. Why won't you let me sit on your lap?

Duryodhana. My son, give up thy wonted seat. Sit anywhere, but from to-day, thou canst sit no more where thou wast wont to sit. **(44)**

Durjaya. Why, where are you going?

Duryodhana. I'll follow my hundred brothers.

Durjaya. Take me with you.

Duryodhana. Go, my son, and talk to Bhīma.

Durjaya. Come, father, they are looking for you.

Duryodhana. Who are?

Durjaya. Granny and grandpa and all the ladies.

Duryodhana. Go, my son, I cannot come.

Durjaya. I'll take you.

Duryodhana. You are too young, my son.

Durjaya. [*Stepping round.*] Ladies, the king is here.

Queens. Woe, woe, the king.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Where is the king?

Gāndhārī. Where is my child?

Durjaya. He's here sitting on the ground.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Alas, is this the king?

In stature he was like a golden pillar, the sole overlord of kings in the world, and now my miserable son lies on the ground no better than the broken bolt of a door. **(45)**

Gāndhārī. Suyodhana, my child, are you tired?

Duryodhana. I am your ladyship's son.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Who is that?

Gāndhārī. 'Tis I, great king, that gave thee fearless sons.

Duryodhana. Now to-day I feel that I am born indeed. Come, father, there is now no need of anxiety.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Why should I be anxious, son?

Thy hundred brothers puffed up with strength and courage, consecrated for the sacrifice of battle, were already slain; with thy single death all's dead. **(46)**

[*Falls.*]

Duryodhana. Alas, the king has fallen. Oh, father, do you console the queen.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. What consolation can I give, my son?

Duryodhana. Why, say that I was slain facing the foe. For my sake, father restrain your grief.

At thy feet alone I bow my crest, without thought of the

blazing fire within I depart for heaven, as proudly as I was born. (47)

Dhṛitarāshṭra. I am an old man, blind from birth, with no desire for life. Bitter grief for my sons curbs my will, overspreads my soul and overwhelms me. (48)

Baladeva. Alas! He has lost all hope for Duryodhana, his eyes are ever closed. I have no heart to announce myself in his exalted presence. (49)

Duryodhana. I would ask a favour from your ladyship.

Gāndhārī. Speak out, my son.

Duryodhana. With folded hands I ask, if I have earned any merit, be thou my mother in another life. (50)

Gāndharī. 'Tis my own wish you have expressed.

Duryodhana. Mālavī, listen.

My forehead was shattered by blows of a mace inflicted during a duel. On my breast there is no space for a necklace, such streams of blood are gushing forth. My two arms, look, are well adorned with wounds as golden bracelets. Thy husband fell in battle facing the foe. Why doest thou weep, warrior-lady? (51)

Mālavī. I'm but a girl, your wedded wife, and so I weep.

Duryodhana. Pauravī, listen.

We have performed the desired sacrifices enjoined by scripture, and supported our kinsmen. The beloved five score brothers vanquished the foe. Our dependents were never deceived in us. The kings of eighteen armies were sore pressed in the battle. Think of my glory with pride. Wives of such men do not weep. (52)

Pauravī. My mind is all made up where I shall go,[1] and so I weep no more.

Duryodhana. Durjaya, you listen too.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Gāndhārī, what is he going to say?

Gāndhārī. My own very thought.

Duryodhana. You must obey the Pāṇḍavas like myself. Follow the directions of the lady mother Kuntī, Abhimanyu's mother and Draupadī you must honour like your own mother. Look you, my son,

Grieve no more, but remember your father Duryodhana, of glorious splendour and a heart fired with pride, fell in battle face to face with an equal foe. Then you must touch Yudhishṭhira's mighty arm, the right arm in its linen, and join

[1] *pavesa*, 'entering', i.e. the funeral pyre.

the sons of Pāṇḍu to give me the last oblation uttering my name. (53)

Baladeva. Ah! hostility has melted to remorse. What, some noise it seems.

All is still, with never a roll of the battle drums; arrows and mail are cast aside with the chowries and umbrellas of state. Charioteers and warriors lie dead. Who is this then twanging his bow and filling the sky with flocks of frightened crows? (54)

[*Voice behind the scenes.*]

As a priest selects a great Horse-sacrifice, so do I come to this crowded battle rite, that first I entered with Duryodhana spanning his bow. (55)

Baladeva. Ah! hither comes Aśvatthāmā, the preceptor's son.

Large eyes as clear as lotus petals fully blown, long arms outstretched as fair as posts of gold—as he eagerly draws his dread bow, he is like Mount Meru all ablaze with a rainbow resting on its peak. (56)

[*Enter Aśvatthāmā.*]

Aśvatthāmā. [*Repeats the verse*, 'As a priest,' &c., 55.] Oh, hearken to me, ye kings renowned in war, though few survive and life is slowly ebbing with every breath, though your bodies be mutilated by those crocodiles, the weapons upraised when the two oceans of opposing forces flowed together in the battle-storm, hearken, I say, to me.

'Twas the Kuru king had his thighs shattered by fraud, not I. 'Twas the son of the charioteer[1] had a sword that broke and failed, not I. Here to-day I stand alone. Droṇa's son, on the field of victory, with sword drawn in eagerness. (57)

But to me too what boots the glory of battle without the praise of victory? [*Steps round.*] Nay not so. The Kuru King, ornament of the Kuru race, was tricked when I was busy with funeral oblations to my father. Who will believe it? For,

Waiting on his word stood the sovereigns of eleven armies, with folded hands held high, mounted on cars and elephants, with bows as other hands; fighting in the fray was Bhīshma, with his mail coat licked by Paraśurāma's arrows and my father; 'tis manifest the hero Duryodhana was defeated by destiny. (58)

Now where is Gāndhārī's son? [*Steps and looks around.*] Ah here is the king of the Kurus, he has crossed the ocean of war and lies amid

[1] Karṇa reputed son of Adhiratha.

a rampart of broken chariots and the corpses of men, elephants, and horses. Here he is,

With the netted beams of his hair fallen dishevelled from his crest, with limbs bleeding from blows of the mace, he sits on the stony seat of his last home[1] and sinks like the westering sun plunging into twilight. (59)

[*Going up to him.*] O king of the Kurus, what is this?

Duryodhana. O son of my preceptor, the result of insatiable ambition.

Aśvatthāmā. King of the Kurus, I am about to abandon the root of righteousness.

Duryodhana. What will you do?

Aśvatthāmā. Listen.

Kṛishṇa is ready for the fight, riding on Garuḍa's back, with his four[2] dread arms, with his disc and bow aloft—him will I wipe out with a network of shafts, and the sons of Pāṇḍu with him, like a picture where the drawing is confused. (60)

Duryodhana. Nay, say not so.

The whole host of anointed kings now lies in the lap of mother-earth. Karṇa has gone to heaven. Santanu's son has fallen. My five score brethren have been slain in the van of battle facing the foe and I am brought to this plight. Preceptor's son, unstring thy bow. (61)

Aśvatthāmā. O king of the Kurus,

When the Pāṇḍava in the fight to-day seized thy hair and cast his mace he broke thy spirit along with thy two thighs. (62)

Duryodhana. Say not so. Kings have pride incarnate. For pride's sake I accepted war. Look you, my preceptor's son,

How Draupadī aforetime was dragged at the gambling match by tresses grasped and twisted in my hand; how young Abhimanyu, still a boy, was slain in battle, how the Pāṇḍavas on the pretext of the dicing had to dwell in the forest with wild beasts; reflect on this, it is little that those chiefs have done to break my spirit. (63)

Aśvatthāmā. I take an oath by everything.

By your Highness and by my own soul I swear, and by the heaven of the brave, I will make a raid by night and destroy the Pāṇḍavas in the fight. (64)

Baladeva. Uttered by the preceptor's son, that should come to pass.

Aśvatthāmā. The worshipful Balarāma.

[1] Astaka.

[2] Reading *ashṭārdha*, suggested by the editor of the text.

Dhṛitarāshṭra. Alas, there was a witness to these crooked words.

Aśvatthāmā. Durjaya come here.

Be thou king, though unanointed, at the bidding of a priest, of a kingdom inherited through the valour of thy sire, a conqueror by the might of his arms. (65)

Duryodhana. Ah my heart's desire is now fulfilled. My life is slipping away. Here are my revered ancestors Śantanu and the others. There rise my hundred brothers with Karṇa at their head. Here too is angry Abhimanyu seated on Indra's elephant, scolding me. See his side-locks and how Mahendra supports him in his palm. Urvaśī and these other nymphs have come for me. Here are the great oceans manifest. There are the great rivers, Ganges and the rest. Death has sent an aerial car, the wain of heroes, drawn by a thousand swans to fetch me. Here I come. [*Expires.*]

[*They cover him with a cloth.*]

Dhṛitarāshṭra. I'll depart for the penance groves so rich in pious folk. Out on a realm made valueless by the loss of my sons!

Aśvatthāmā. Now do I depart, my bowman's hand uplifted for the slaughter of the sleepers.

May the King destroy all enemies and protect the earth. (66)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

FINIS.

AVIMĀRAKA

(*Sheep-killer*)

INTRODUCTION

To call this play *The Magic Ring* would lay rather too much emphasis on the ring that caused invisibility. That familiar motif is subordinate to the main story of the Hero which is based on an ancient fairy tale [1]—and which is alluded to by the name Sheep-killer. Nevertheless the ring is an important element in the play. It saves the Hero from suicide and enables him to find his way back to his beloved in the palace he has left as a fugitive. Such a title as *The Magic Ring* would at once suggest some such incident. *Avimāraka*, 'Sheep-killer,' needs some explanation. It is the name of the Hero, who has rescued the Heroine from an elephant just before the play begins. In spite of his gallant conduct it appears he is an outcaste. This seems incredible and we soon suspect that he is a prince in disguise. But outcaste or prince why should he be named 'Sheep-killer'? The explanation comes in the last act, which reveals his history.

Once upon a time there were two sisters, Sudarśanā and Sucetanā. The elder married the king of Benares, but her firstborn was really the son of Agni, the God of Fire. Sucetanā, who married the king of the Sauvīras, secretly adopted her sister's child and brought him up as the Sauvīra prince with the name of Vishṇusena. Semi-divine he grew up with amazing beauty and, while still a child, slew a demon disguised in the form of a sheep. So the people gave him the nickname of 'Sheep-killer'.

Now the king of the Sauvīras, the Hero's reputed father, was cursed by a sage. Out hunting he happened to come upon the holy man, just when his pupil had been mauled by a tiger. The angry ascetic blamed the king and would not listen to his explanation. The king lost his temper and abused the sage.

> 'Unworthy vessel of penance thou by reason of thine anger—
> in form a sage divine, in fact a savage fed on dogs.' (VI. 5.)

[1] Actually traced so far to the eleventh century as in Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*, B. K. 16, but doubtless much older.

This last word *Śvapāka*—a dog-cooking outcaste—is unforgivable. The sage blazes with anger and curses him.

> 'Whereas a great sage divine like me has been styled an outcaste, so shall thou with wife and son sink to the level of outcastes.' (VI. 6.)

However, the ban was limited to a year, which comes to an end before the play finishes. During the year the king of the Sauvīras, his queen Sucetanā, and Avimāraka were living as outcastes in Kuntibhoja's city, and Avimāraka rescued the princess Kuraṅgī, Kuntibhoja's daughter.

In the play it is clearly indicated that the outcaste youth must be other than he seems. Indeed the audience might well know the outline of the story of Avimāraka. But the full explanation is kept for the last act.

The king and queen are discussing the question of Kuraṅgī's marriage when a minister brings in tidings of the princess being attacked by an elephant. He describes her rescue by a handsome youth, who professed to be low-born. Another minister, Bhūtika, confirms the news. He has made inquiries, but refuses to believe in the youth's ignoble birth. The king orders further investigations to be made and resumes the question of Kuraṅgī's marriage. The King of the Sauvīras had sent an envoy, but now it is learnt that both the king and the prince of that country have disappeared. In the meantime the king of Benares has sent an ambassador to sue for Kuraṅgī's hand, that is for his son Jayavarman. Decision is postponed. (ACT I.)

An Interlude introduces us to the Jester, Avimāraka's companion, who is fooled by a maid from the *palace*. It seems odd that a man living as an outcaste should have a brahman companion. He has to get back to his master's place on the quiet. Yet the maid tricks him by saying 'There's the prince', and the Jester intends to report her conduct to the prince. Evidently she belongs to the household of the king of the Sauvīras.[1]

Avimāraka is sitting at home brooding over the beauty of the princess he has rescued. Kuraṅgī's Nurse and Little Lotus come to look for him. This is a dangerous errand, but the little princess is pining away, longing for a sight of her heroic rescuer. The invitation is conveyed and Avimāraka is to climb into the palace at midnight. He tells the Jester, but refuses to take him with him. (ACT II.)

In the Third Act we see Kuraṅgī with her maidens. Little Lotus tells her that Avimāraka will come.

[1] Not as the Editor suggests to Kuraṅgī's household.

Avimāraka appears disguised as a burglar with a rope and sword. He is supposed to be in the street, and in a long monologue acts the climbing of the wall and finding his way to the princess's apartments. (ACT III.)

In the Interlude introducing the Fourth Act we learn that all has been discovered, the prince has fled, and the princess is broken-hearted.

Avimāraka attempts to throw himself into a forest fire. But the God of Fire is his real father and will not hurt him. Then he determines to throw himself from a precipice. He is diverted from this by the Fairy who gives him the magic ring. He finds his friend the Jester, who is searching for him, and, made invisible by the ring, they enter Kuraṅgī's palace together. (ACT IV.)

Kuraṅgī in the meantime is disconsolate and tries to hang herself. Avimāraka arrives in time to stop her. An amusing scene with the Jester and Little Lotus saves us from an excess of sentiment. The Hero describes the beauty of the rain-clouds and the lovers retire. (ACT V.)

Arrangements are being made for the marriage of Kuraṅgī to the prince of Benares. The king of the Sauvīras, now free from the curse that had reduced him to the status of an outcaste, comes to see Kuntibhoja, Kuraṅgī's father. He tells the story of the curse and how Vishṇusena came to be called Avimāraka.

Nārada the celestial busybody arrives to put things right, and explains the divine origin of Vishṇusena, and his marriage with Kuraṅgī—a love marriage by mutual consent. The prince of Benares is promised Kuraṅgī's younger sister and all is well that ends well. (ACT VI.)

As we do not know what version of the Avimāraka story was familiar to our dramatist, it is not possible to determine how much is original in the plot of this play. It is clear that the Avimāraka story has been combined with another of a magic ring.[1] The subject of the Gāndharva marriage by mutual consent is handled with admirable discretion and delicacy.

The First Act with the discussion about Kuraṅgī's marriage and the obvious hint to the audience recalls the Second Act of *The Minister's Vows*.

The scenes with the Jester are as lively as others in this series, and the dialogue of the Hero with the Nurse is amusing. The most characteristic passages in the play are the monologues of Avimāraka, his brooding, his sentimental burglary, and his attempts at suicide. The

[1] See Introd. to Weller's Translation, p. 13.

descriptions of darkness (III. 3, 4) and of a city at night are striking. The passage about the Fairy's sword (IV. 15) appears to be spurious, and the text of the Sixth Act seems to be badly preserved. The explanations of this Act are necessary, but the ending with mutual complements seems rather feeble.

The final benedictory verse is identical with that of *The Minister's Vows*.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager } in Prologue.
Actress }

KING, i. e. Kuntibhoja of Vairantya, father of Kuraṅgī.

Portress, Ketumālī.

Queen, wife of Kuntibhoja.

Attendant in Kuntibhoja's palace. (Jayasena.)

Kauñjāyana, Minister of Kuntibhoja.

Bhūtika, Minister in charge of the princess's palace.

JESTER, Santushṭa, companion of Avimāraka.

Maid, Candrikā of Avimāraka's household.

AVIMĀRAKA, the Hero, really Vishṇusena, elder son of Sudarśanā, Queen of Benares and the God of Fire, adopted by Sucetanā, her sister, Queen of the Sauvīras.

Nurse of Princess Kuraṅgī. (Jayadā.)

Little Lotus, maid in attendance on Princess Kuraṅgī.

Maid in Avimāraka's house.

KURAṄGĪ, the Heroine, daughter of Kuntibhoja.

Māgadhikā } Maids in attendance on Princess Kuraṅgī.
Vilāsinī }

Fairy, Vidyādhara.

Saudāminī, the Fairy's ladylove.

Hariṇikā } Serving woman in Kuraṅgī's household.
Vasumitrā }

King of the Sauvīras, husband of Sucetanā and reputed father of Avimāraka.

Nārada, the sage and busybody.

Sudarśanā, Queen of Benares, real mother of Avimāraka. Also of Jayavarman, betrothed to Kuraṅgī, but in the end married to her sister Sumitrā.

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening enter the Stage-manager.*]

Stage-Manager. May glorious Nārāyaṇa direct this [1] earth beneath one royal umbrella; this earth that, poised on the tip of a single tusk,[2] was gently raised from the ocean brine; this earth that was bestridden by a single foot [3] and shaken in the combat where Diti's son [4] was slain: this earth that, shielded as one realm, Rāma [5] had his joy of, lovingly grasped in his powerful arms. (1)

[*Looking towards the curtain.*]

Madam, come here.

[*Enter an Actress.*]

Actress. Here I am, sir.

Manager. Your smile, madam, and that eager look reveal something of the thought within. Clearly you have something to say.

Actress. No wonder, sir, they say you are a thought-reader.

Manager. Then speak out freely.

Actress. I want you to take me to the park, I have a pious duty to perform there, a rite for women.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Bhūtika! Do you go to the park to guard the Princess Kuraṅgī. For the elephant, Añjanagiri [6] is in an excited mood.

Manager. Did you hear, madam? The princess has gone to the park. So just now the gardens will have sentries at every entrance. As soon as the princess has returned, we will go with pleasure.

Actress. As you please, sir.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF PROLOGUE.

[1] Reading *tām* for *te*.

[2] Of Vishṇu, in the form of the Boar.

[3] Of Vishṇu, in the form of Vāmana, the dwarf, in which form he took the three strides.

[4] Hiraṇya Kaśipu. A Daitya king killed by Vishṇu in the form of the Man Lion.

[5] Vishṇu, in the form of Rāma, slew Rāvaṇa and regained his wife Sītā and the sovereignty of the earth.

[6] 'Mount Antimony.'

ACT I

[*Enter the King with his retinue.*]

King. The sacrifices are performed and the good priests are content with me. Proud monarchs have been taught the taste of fear. Yet, for it all my mind has no delight. For ever is there anxious care for the father of a maid. (2)

Ketumatī, go and fetch the queen.

Portress. As my master bids. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter the Queen with her retinue.*]

Queen. Greeting to your Majesty.

King. You always do look pleased, my queen, but to-day you seem more pleased than ever. What is the reason of this delight?

Queen. Why, your Majesty said an ambassador had come for Kuraṅgī's hand. So I shall soon see my son-in-law.

King. Quite so. But we have not yet made up our mind. Come and sit down.

Queen. As your Majesty commands. [*Sits down.*]

King. My queen, marriages should be made after the greatest circumspection. For—

If a girl is given at her father's whim without a thought of the bridegroom's excellence, the woman's passion destroys both houses, as a stream with swollen waters destroys both banks. (3)

Ah! some noise. It might be many things. For—

It is distant but seems near; it is so loud. There may be a thousand reasons, but my mind is troubled for Kuraṅgī. (4)

Queen. Oh! my little girl has gone to the park.

King. Who is there?

[*Enter an Attendant.*]

Attendant. Greeting to your Majesty. The noble Kauñjāyana has come to make a report.

King. Bring him in at once.

Attendant. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Kauñjāyana.*]

Kauñjāyana. [*Despondent.*] Hard indeed is a minister's lot. For—

If things go well, folk say it is the royal power, but when they go wrong, then clearly the minister's advice is to blame. It is fine and pleasing to the ear to be dubbed a 'minister', but the

wretched men, for all their clever, powerful minds, are subtly punished by their kings. (5)

Jayasena. Where is our lord? What do you say—in the Audience Hall? That place is free of access. [*Steps round hurriedly.*] Pardon, pardon, my lord.

King. Don't be excited. Sit down at your ease and tell your news.

Kauñjāyana. Listen, my lord. You told me to go to the park with the princess.

King. So I did. What then?

Kauñjāyana. The princess went to the park and played about as she pleased. Then on her return an elephant appeared on the scene, blind with rut, dripping with excitement, made all the worse by hearing the merry stories of the menials, men and women. Its face was wet with a shower of ichor. It had thrown its driver and killed him. Its dreadful form was indistinct and cloaked in dust raised from the ground. Like an incarnation of the wind, its swift movements were visible for a moment and gone the next. It seemed to wish to bring censure on your Majesty's ministers, or to display unique courage.

King. The detail may wait. Tell me, is Kuraṅgī all right?

Kauñjāyana. How could she be otherwise while fortune smiles upon your Majesty?

King. Thank heaven! Now you may tell the tale as you like.

Kauñjāyana. Then the common people took to their heels; women could do nothing but scream. Brave men who approached it were knocked down. Then just at the moment when Nītigupta and I were busy inspecting all the accessories in the park, the elephant made a sudden rush at the princess's carriage.

Queen. Oh, dear, what next?

King. Then who rescued the princess?

Kauñjāyana. A handsome youth. [*Breaks off.*]

King. Speak out now freely. Accidents cannot be controlled.

Kauñjāyana. It was a handsome youth, but not conceited; young but modest, brave but courteous, delicate but strong. When the princess was attacked by the elephant he came to the rescue, a hard thing to do at the moment, and without concern he faced the beast.

King. He has paid his debt to chivalry. Proceed.

Kauñjāyana. Then the brute left the princess and, enraged by the playful but vigorous slaps of his hand, suddenly turned on him to kill him.

Queen. I hope he's all right.

King. What then?

Kauñjāyana. Meanwhile Bhūtika and I appeared on the scene. We put the princess into her carriage again and bringing her quickly back sent her into the inner rooms.

King. Aha! this is great negligence. Then why has Bhūtika not presented himself?

Kauñjāyana. Bhūtika asked me to come and tell your Majesty the news. He himself would come directly after finding out tidings of that youth and his connexions.

King. So Bhūtika will come when he has made all inquiries. Tell me, Kauñjāyana, of what family is this youth who aids others in distress?

Kauñjāyana. Sire, he contradicts himself by saying he is low-born.

Queen. Majesty, how could a low-born man be so chivalrous?

King. What can it mean?

[*Enter Bhūtika.*]

Bhūtika. [*Perplexed.*] Ah! What jewels are hidden in the earth. This man's patent heroism puts in the shade some wise peoples' notions of valour. Only one thing troubles me. Why does he conceal his identity and connexions? Rather, who can conceal the sun with his hand? For, in this world—

> Good men at times remain hidden on this earth for private cause or directed by their elders. Then finding others in trouble and wishing to rescue them, they forget their former resolution and stand revealed. (6)

Jayasena, where is our lord? What do you say—'In the Audience Hall'? That place is free of access. I shall enter. [*Enters.*] Ah! here is his Majesty sitting with the Queen. [*Approaches.*] Greeting to your Majesty.

King. My queen, please go within and comfort Kuraṅgī. I shall follow you directly.

Queen. As your Majesty bids. [*Exit.*]

King. What news of the man who risked his life for the sake of others?

Bhūtika. Hearken, my lord. For a while he played with that elephant carelessly and at his ease, as if amusing himself with a pet, turning it this way and that way in zigzags till it was quite bewildered. Then, as if ashamed of his deed and annoyed at the praise of the crowd, he went slowly away to his house with his head bent towards the ground.

King. Ah, I am glad. This is my second piece of luck to-day.

Bhūtika. In the meantime some female elephants were brought up, and by means of these the rogue elephant was captured and put in his stable, and I went off on some pretext to find out tidings of that youth and his connexions.

King. And what is the result? We hear he is low-born.

Bhūtika. Heaven forfend! He could not be. For some reason he is concealing his identity and connexions.

King. Did you question him?

Bhūtika. What need to question him?

His form divine, his speech saintly, with the brilliance of a warrior, tenderness and strength. If he be all that and yet truly of ignoble birth, then fruitless is our toil in studying the Scriptures. (7)

King. [Has he a wife?[1]

Bhūtika. Very probably. I was not interested in that.

King. But, though you avoided seeing his womenfolk], why didn't you question his father?

Bhūtika. I saw the gentleman, a worthy father of a virtuous son—

His shoulders broad and lofty, huge and firm with exercise; his powerful wrist bears the familiar mark of rubbing on a bowstring. Though in concealment, his appearance proclaims his royal birth. He is like the sun hidden behind a cloud but revealed by its radiance. (8)

King. Enough, all that is merely a possibility. You must inquire into this again.

Bhūtika. As my lord commands.

King. But what now is to be done about the ambassador from the king of Benares?

Bhūtika. Sire, hundreds of ambassadors have come and hundreds more will come.

There's nothing in the world to do with them. Great honour comes to the father of a maid. For all kings regard the daughter of a king as wrestlers do the flag. (9)

King. What do you mean?

Bhūtika. I mean that all should not receive the same consideration. One should bear in mind the greater virtue, the present and the future, avoiding haste and procrastination. So the business should be accomplished as befits both time and place.

King. Bhūtika has spoken well. Kauñjāyana, why are you silent?

[1] *Kalatram* ordinarily means 'a wife'. Weller takes it in the sense of 'harem', and so *kalatraṃ svayam aniviṣṭaḥ* ('but I did not enter the harem'). Sarup takes *aniviṣṭaḥ* in the sense of 'unmarried', *svayam* referring to Avimāraka; compare *nirviṣṭaḥ* ('married') in Act vi. 12. So he would translate:

'**King.** Are there any women in his family?

Bhūtika. Yes, he has everything, but he himself is unmarried.'

Weller quotes the authority of Jacobi for regarding these two lines and the next as spurious.

Kauñjāyana. Sire, of all the princes there are two distinguished by a previous connexion—the king of Sauvīra and the king of Benares; both alike in being married to one of your Majesty's sisters, these two your Majesty thought worthy of this alliance. The king of Sauvīra sent an envoy on a previous occasion on behalf of his son. We sent him back, with all honour, under the pretext that the girl was too young. But now the king of Benares has sent an envoy on behalf of his son. Your Majesty is the best authority as to the relative merit of these two.

King. Well said, Kauñjāyana. Bhūtika, leaving all the other kings out of account and taking these two, which has the superiority?

Bhūtika. Kings should not be criticized by servants, for they are masters of the ministers, your Majesty.

King. Enough of your civility. Tell me, what is your opinion?

Bhūtika. Now, I cannot decline to speak. Sire, the kings of Sauvīra and Benares are equal as being husbands of your Majesty's sisters. But the king of Sauvīra has the further advantage of being a brother of the queen.

King. You certainly say nothing contrary to our intention.

Bhūtika. I thank you on both accounts.

King. Why, sir, has not the king of Sauvīra sent another ambassador?

Bhūtika. I have my own suspicions. I said nothing as I thought I would make a thorough inquiry before I spoke.

King. Isn't his Majesty well?

Bhūtika. Spies declare—

> His Majesty and his son have disappeared; the ministers carry on the government. No one can tell the reason and nobody is admitted to the palace. (10)

King. Well, what can it mean?

> Is he smitten by passion? Or seized by treacherous ministers? Is he struck by some disease? Or is he putting the loyalty of his people to the test? Has he been cursed by the priests that he takes to penance and is making expiation? Or what is the reason of closing his palace? (11)

You must investigate this matter at once.

Bhūtika. As your Majesty commands.

King. Kauñjāyana, what shall we do now about this envoy from Benares?

Kauñjāyana. Under the circumstances he should be shown all honour. Marriages are best arranged with many doorways open.

King. Ah, a minister's mind ever looks to business, not to sentiment.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Greeting to our lord and king. Four hours have gone.[1]

Bhūtika. Sire, we can consider the rest within. The time for your bath is passing, and the princess must be comforted. The queen has been expecting you for some time. Also the populace wish to see their lord after this accident.

King. Aho! sovereignty is a heavy burden. For—

First of all there is the law to be observed, then the king himself must probe the workings of ministers' minds. Love and rage must be concealed. He must show himself gentle and stern at the proper moments. He must know what the people are doing and study the kings around him through the eyes of spies. He must take pains to guard his life, yet disregard it in the van of battle. (12)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

INTERLUDE

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. Ah! These young bloods can't understand distinctions of position. So his highness Avimāraka doesn't think anything of his loss of caste through the curse of a seer or of living in a low-born family. He cares nothing about his parents or his own right judgement. Ever since the day of that dust-up with the elephant, when he saw Kuraṅgī, Kuntibhoja's daughter, he has been like a different man. Tut, tut, to cut it short, he doesn't want to talk even to me. He spends his whole time in a brown study. It is a true proverb that 'Troubles come in shoals'. How can there be an alliance? She a princess and he low-born? Well, I must avoid the censure of the brahmans and must visit some of their houses and so get to my master's place on the quiet.

[*Enter a Maid.*]

Maid. With all this fuss going on in the palace, there isn't much to

[1] Ten *nālikās* of 24 minutes each. Neither four hours after daybreak nor four hours after midday seem suitable for the king's bath. Weller makes it eight hours. Perhaps after counting up to ten *nālikās* one began again. Sarup takes *nālikā* here to be a vessel for bathing. 'Ten vessels are full of water for the king to bathe.' The phrase reoccurs in the Abhisheka-nāṭaka ii. 18.

do; so I've come out to have a look at the town. [*Stepping and looking around.*] Hullo, there goes Master Satisfied. Good, I will liven up the dullness for a while by joking with him. [*Goes towards him and looks up.*] Oh, Kaumudikā, have you found a brahman? What do you say? 'Not yet'?

Jester. What is it, Candrikā?

Maid. I am looking, sir, for a brahman.

Jester. What do you want a brahman for?

Maid. What do you think? Why, to ask him to dinner.

Jester. But what am I, lady, a Buddhist monk?

Maid. Oh, but you don't know the Scriptures.

Jester. How can you say I don't know the Scriptures? Just listen. There's a treatise on drama called Rāmāyaṇa. I learnt up five verses of that in less than a year.

Maid. I know, I know. You are wonderfully learned by heredity.

Jester. Not only learnt the verses, mind you, but know the meaning too. Besides, I have another distinction. It's hard to find a brahman who can read as well as understand.

Maid. Well, then, read this word for me. [*Shows him a signet ring.*]

Jester. [*Aside.*] I don't know what it is; what am I to say?

[*Pondering.*] Yes, that's the thing. [*Aloud.*]

This word is not in my book, lady.

Maid. If you can't read it, you must dine without a fee.

Jester. Oh, very well.

Maid. May I just have a look at your own ring?

Jester. Yes, look at mine; it's a beauty.

Maid. [*Taking the ring.*] Oh, there's the prince coming this way.

Jester. [*Turning round and looking.*] Where's his highness? Where?

Maid. I've hoodwinked the silly brahman. Now I'll mix with the crowd, give him the slip in the square, and get away. [*Exit.*]

Jester. [*Looking all round.*] Candrikā, Candrikā! Where has she gone? Oh, I have been robbed. I knew what she was, the pickpocket's slut, and then I let myself be diddled by relying on that dinner. [*Stepping round.*] Come to think of it, I believe the dinner was a fake. [*Looking in front.*] Ho! there she is, running away. Stop, stop, you wicked hussy! Stop, I say. Run, will she? Well, I will run too. [*Runs.*] My feet stick to the same spot like those of a man pursued by an elephant in a dream. Dash it, I'll report this minx's conduct to the prince. [*Exit.*]

END OF INTERLUDE.

[*Avimāraka discovered seated.*]

Avimāraka. I see her even now, the maid with sad eyes[1] quivering, all confused with fear, her limbs cooled by the spray of the elephant's trunk; finding her constantly in my dreams, when I wake I remember her again, like one that recalls a former birth. (1)

How powerful is the God of Love, for—

From that day on my eyes desire no other form. My heart delights in the thought of her and then despairs. My face grows pale, my body thin. I pass my days in sorrow and my nights in delusion. (2)

But lack of fortitude is unmanly. Brooding over it makes love wax greater. So now I'll brood no more. [*Recollecting.*] How perfectly beautiful she was. Her youth in keeping with her beauty, as dainty as she is young. In her—

Either the Creator has fashioned an image of a damsel's charms, or the brilliance of the Lord of Stars has somehow taken a woman's form. Or else the Goddess of Beauty has abandoned Kṛishṇa, sleeping on his watery couch, and being afraid is dwelling in this monarch's palace in another woman's form. (3)

How now? I have started thinking about her again. Now, what can I do?

My mind will not answer to my will. For—

Firmly forbidden, it regards not that for a single moment, but gallops along the old accustomed track, like the gabbled repetition of a sacred text. (4)

Nay, then, I cannot overcome my mind. I shall think about her. Ah! All the charms of women are collected in one person. [*Sits down absorbed in thought.*]

[*Enter the Nurse and Little Lotus (Nalinikā).*]

Nurse. [*Reflecting.*] It's a risky business. If I do it, it means the disgrace of the royal house. If I don't, it means she perishes. I have considered a lot of different ways. Even now she hides it even from me. Well, hides it, I say, but how can she? Ever since that day she cares nothing for jasmine paste,[2] has no appetite for food, no pleasure in conversing with her friends. She sighs deeply, talks disconnectedly, doesn't know what is said, laughs to herself, weeps in solitude. She pretends she is ill and grows thinner and paler. There is only one

[1] Reading *viṣādi* with editor. [2] *Sumana-varṇaka*, or 'flower ointment'.

thing strange about it all. In all these varied moods, she doesn't let on a word to a single soul, be it from bashfulness, timidity, family pride, or childishness.

Little Lotus. Not a word to any one? Why, she tells me all about it.

Nurse. I know what you mean to say, my dear. Find out what he is, and in any case unite him with the lady.

Little Lotus. How could such a man with such qualities be low-born?

Nurse. There is some doubt about it. I heard the minister say before the queen: 'He's not what he makes out. For some reason he conceals who he is, saying he's of a low caste.'

Little Lotus. Who could he be?

Nurse. But for this doubt, none but this paragon would be the son-in-law.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

> If there be wealth and beauty, knowledge and valour, how then? Purity of conduct is not found among the ignobly born. Of his family thou shalt hear in sooth when the time comes. Cease doubting of his family and bring this matter to a happy end. (5)

Nurse. My dear, who was it spoke?

Little Lotus. There's nobody to be seen.

Nurse. My body's all of a thrill with hairs bristling. It must have been a god that spoke. And I am sure he is no ordinary mortal.

Little Lotus. There is no doubt left about his family, but I am wondering whether he will do what we tell him. [*Reflects.*] Happy the man who can infatuate her so. In a word, if Love himself had seen the princess's beauty he would be tormented. And so I reckon he too must be in torment.

Nurse. Here's his house, my dear. We came here from curiosity on the day of the fuss with the elephant.

Little Lotus. Look, dear, what a beautiful doorway, and there's been oblations made. Come, let us go in.

Nurse. [*Speaking to a maid behind the scene.*] My good girl, where is your master's son? What do you say—'In the outer hall'?[1] [*Stepping around and looking.*] Here is our young man sitting alone thinking about something.

Little Lotus. Well, dear, let's go in.

Nurse. Yes, let's. [*Goes in.*] Howdido, sir?

[1] *Caüssāle.*

Avimāraka. Ah, how perfectly beautiful she is.

Nurse. [*Puzzled.*] Eh, what's that? Howdido, sir?

Avimāraka. Her bosom languid with her pouting breasts; her slender form overburdened by her hips.

Nurse. Gracious; he's babbling!

Avimāraka. Her face so delightful to the eye, her lips like the *bimba* pith, nature's hue.

Nurse. Happy the person who can infatuate him so.

Avimāraka. If even in danger she has such beauty for eyes to feast on.[1]

Nurse. Our business will be easy.

Avimāraka. What a wealth of graces would there be twixt dalliance? (6)

Nurse. It's herself has turned his head.

Little Lotus. You may well say—'he too must be in torment'.

Nurse. You're about right. Howdido, sir?

Avimāraka. [*Looking round, bashfully.*] Welcome, ladies.

Both Ladies. Are you well, sir?

Avimāraka. On seeing you I must be.

Nurse. Sir, what were you thinking about?

Avimāraka. Science, madam.

Nurse. What's the name of this delightful science you think about all alone?

Avimāraka. Why, madam, the science of union.

Nurse. [*Smiling.*] There we have the lucky word. Science of union may it be.

Avimāraka. [*Aside.*] Now, what is she driving at? Forced by my heart's desires I imagine something very different. [*Aloud.*] Madam, what do you mean?

Nurse. It is to promote a union that we have come. You, sir, speak of union with approval. So our task is all but done. In the palace, in a lonely spot—there's someone there thinking even more of—union. With that person there your honour may well think out the means of union.

Avimāraka. What, is there still some happiness left to me? [*Rising from his seat.*] Madam, you have restored me to life. For—

When I saw her lovely face, her eyes dilated with alarm were a deadly drug to me, exceeding pungent for all their[2] tenderness, and I completely lost my wits. Now, at last, good

[1] Lit. 'to be quaffed in the goblet of eyes'. [2] Properly, of the face.

ladies, your message is the antidote that has made me once more conscious. (7)

Nurse. I am happy, sir, to be so honoured. There's no need to beat about the bush. This very day you must make your way into the princess's palace. The honourable Bhūtika, the minister in charge of the princess's quarters, has gone out with the ambassador from Benares with all honours from our king.

Avimāraka. Good. It is an excellent suggestion. What sick man, madam, that finds a remedy will hesitate to use it ?

Nurse. Getting in 's the only difficulty. Once inside you could stay for ages.

Avimāraka. You may reckon on my being in. But the whole suite [1] should be kept open with nothing bolted.

Nurse. We shall do that. We shall get everything ready inside. Only, do be careful about getting in.

Avimāraka. Madam, explain to me once for all the plan of the palace.

Nurse. It 's like this. [*Explains the plan to him.*]

Avimāraka. Splendid.

Now that I have heard how the king's palace is planned, my mind is certain of my entry. Anyway, my manhood shall not be disgraced by opponents unless destiny is set on disappointment. (8)

[*Reflecting.*] But, madam, what assurance have I in this business ?

Both Women. This is the assurance. 'Victory to the Prince.'

Avimāraka. Ah, well. You may go now. Expect me at midnight.

Both Women. As the Prince commands. [*Exeunt ambo.*]

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. How beautiful the city looks at this hour. The blessed sun is setting. On the promenades and the upper terraces of the market, as white as lumps of curd, the sunlight seems like a layer of treacle spread over them.[2] Up and down on the promenades walk the courtesan and city blood with their wanton airs, anxious to show themselves off, and rivalling each other in their finery. I had a look at it all, but now I have left the town as I have to pass the night in the company of His Infatuated Highness. And he, to our misfortune, has become a changed man through some futile preoccupation. Here is his abode. I heard on the market terrace to-day that the princess's nurse and one of her companions came out of his house. Now, what were they after here ? Verily, human happiness is as restless as an elephant's trunk. May our

[1] ? *Kriyantām.*   [2] Reading ?

misfortune pass! I must enter this place well-suited to our condition. [*Goes in.*] Oho! here comes his highness, very pale, as if smeared with the cosmetic that lovers use. Well, any thing serves to adorn the beautiful. [*Going up to him.*] Greeting!

Avimāraka. Ah, comrade, you have been a very long time in the city.

Jester. You spend the day and night dreaming like a brahman that has been taken in by an invitation while I wander about the town by day and come here at night to sleep at your side, like a common strumpet getting no fees.

Avimāraka. My friend, I'll tell you some good news.

Jester. What! Has the sage's curse come to an end?

Avimāraka. Idiot. What joy is there in what's bound to happen?

Jester. What else then?

Avimāraka. Didn't you see Kuraṅgī's nurse and Little Lotus?

Jester. Yes, indeed. I saw the ladies. What did they bring you?

Avimāraka. The remedy for my trouble.

Jester. Let me see it.

Avimāraka. You shall in good time. To-day you must simply listen.

Jester. Go on, speak out.

Avimāraka. The fact is, the lady says I am to enter the princess's quarters this very night.

Jester. [*Laughing.*] How are you going to get in? Do you want to be taken prisoner? Kuntibhoja's ministers are frightful fellows.

Avimāraka. How can you have misgivings? Look you—

> All alone I defeated my opponents with their armies. To this day there is no trace of them. Why speak of men? With my two arms I slew the lord of demons that took the form of a sheep. (9)

Jester. Yes, I know your superhuman deeds. All the same, getting into another man's house under the cover of darkness is a risky business.

Avimāraka. The long and short of it is this. Whatever happens I must get into the apartments of Kuntibhoja's daughter. So please agree, great brahman.

Jester. What! Would you leave me behind? I will never, never let you go. Even in abuse you need one other.

Avimāraka. You don't know how the Scripture goes.

> One should go alone to another's house, take counsel with a second, and take the field with many. Such is the ruling in Scripture. (10)

So I must go into Kuntibhoja's palace all by myself. You need not worry about me. Look you—

Kuntibhoja's troops have little mettle. Money easily finds the way into a palace. And I am skilled in wrestling. Then why, my friend, should you have misgivings? (11)

Jester. If you are so determined let us go now into the town. I have a friend there. We will wait there till the time comes.

Avimāraka. That is a good idea. I shall go in now, perform my devotions, bid the King good night, and go to bed in my room. Then I'll slip off to the town and wait in your friend's house.

[*Enter a Maid.*]

Maid. To the prince, greeting! The bath water is ready.

Avimāraka. Here I come; lead the way.

Maid. As the prince orders. [*Exit.*]

Avimāraka. Comrade, the sun has set. For now—

The eastern quarter is tinged with black while the west gleams with the evening red. The sky between is divided into two and attains the beauty of Śiva in his form half goddess. (12)

Jester. You are quite right. The day is past, the dusk has come.

Avimāraka. Ah, what a wonderful thing the world is! For—

This world of ours would seem to don another guise—wiping from its brow the red circle[1] of the sun, and flinging far a wreath of stars. Its burning heat has gone, cooled in a soft delicious breeze. With lovers interlaced and robbers[2] scattered here and there it seems another world. (13)

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

[*Enter Kuraṅgī and two maidens.*]

Kuraṅgī. Well, what did he say?

Maid. Who, Princess?

Kuraṅgī. [*Aside.*] Ah! I'm giving myself away, unlucky that I am. [*Aloud.*] Why, the attendant.[3]

Magadhikā. I saw the attendant and spoke to him; but he said nothing.

[1] *Tilaka.* [2] Reading *-coro* with editor. [3] Lit. harem servant.

Kuraṅgī. Ha! I shall report him to the queen for not making me a parrot's cage.
Māgadhikā. But your highness's parrot cage is finished.
Kuraṅgī. Chatterbox! Is there a second cage?
Māgadhikā. There may be.
Kuraṅgī. Well, what time is it?
Māgadhikā. The evening is passing.
Kuraṅgī. Then let's go up on the roof.
Māgadhikā. Do you go first, Vilāsinī; get the divan ready and the seats.
Vilāsinī. You must be asleep. They've been ready ages.
Māgadhikā. Ho, I know you, you lazy thing. Ready for the siesta; I suppose you call that ready.
Vilāsinī. Don't talk like that, my dear. They have all been rearranged according to the princess's wishes.
Māgadhikā. Well, I shall go and see.

[*All step round.*]

Māgadhikā. Here is the terrace.
Kuraṅgī. Lead the way. [*Indicates mounting steps.*]
Māgadhikā. Well done, Vilāsinī; your work is equal to your name.[1] Here is the divan spread on the stone bench.
Vilāsinī. There 's a bed laid inside the pavilion. See, Māgadhikā, how lazy I am.
Māgadhikā. You're getting too clever for words. So you'd better marry a learned chamberlain.
Kuraṅgī. My dears, I'll sit awhile on this stone bench.
Māgadhikā. As the princess pleases. Come.

[*They all sit down.*]

Māgadhikā. Princess, shall I tell you a story?
Kuraṅgī. Oh, I know your absurd rigmaroles.
Māgadhikā. Oh, Princess, it's quite a new story.
Kuraṅgī. I beg you, don't disturb me. I'll sleep awhile.
Vilāsinī. Sleep well, Princess. [*To Māgadhikā.*] Tell me the story.
Kuraṅgī. [*To herself.*] What 's it about, I wonder.
Māgadhikā. Well, listen. It's about our princess.
Kuraṅgī. [*To herself.*] Oh, dear, they know my secret. I am undone.
Vilāsinī. Where did you hear it, my dear?
Māgadhikā. Vasumitrā, the queen's attendant, told me.
Vilāsinī. The queen herself must have told her.
Māgadhikā. There 's a son of the king of Benares named Jayavarman.

[1] *Vilāsinī*—'charming'.

The princess is betrothed to him. His envoy has arrived and has been honourably received by the king. The wedding paint has been accepted.

Kuraṅgī. [*Aside.*] That 's not true. I can dispose of myself.

Māgadhikā. Then the queen said her daughter was only a child, and she couldn't live a single day without seeing her. If his Majesty agreed they could send for the bridegroom here.

Vilāsinī. What then?

Māgadhikā. Then his Majesty agreed to that. As the stars were said to be favourable to-day, the minister Bhūtika has set out with the envoy.

Kuraṅgī. [*Aside.*] Well, that will take some time.

Vilāsinī. I am glad the youth and beauty of our princess will now bear fruit.

[*Enter Little Lotus.*]

Little Lotus. My mother told me to come here and tell this news to the princess. 'Pleasant news,' she said, 'told in a pleasant way becomes the more delightful. She doesn't look me in the face and tell me everything, but in course of time I shall get at it indirectly.' So now I must tell the good news to the princess. [*Steps around.*]

Kuraṅgī. This is some malady I never had before. The more I think of it the more it drives me silly. I [1] care nothing for jasmine paste. I've no pleasure in conversation. It's dreadful and yet delightful. [*Sighing.*] What is that, Little Lotus?

Māgadhikā. Princess, it is I, Māgadhikā.

Vilāsinī. And I, Vilāsinī.

Little Lotus. [*Approaching.*] Princess, it is I, Little Lotus. Your highness knew me by my footsteps on the stairs. Princess, the queen says . . .

Kuraṅgī. Yes, what?

Little Lotus. [*Whispering.*] This—

Kuraṅgī. Oh, my character is gone.

Little Lotus. Nay, he is worthy of honour. He is indeed the same man.

Kuraṅgī. Massage me, Little Lotus.

Little Lotus. As the princess bids.

Vilāsinī. When will the wedding take place, Little Lotus?

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

To-day.

Little Lotus. Long life to you!

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Good watchmen, they say the minister has gone away, and he has sent

[1] Reading the first person.

nobody to look after the princess's palace. Well, never mind. I shall report the matter to the king to-morrow.

Vilāsinī. Oh, what did he say, Little Lotus?

Little Lotus. He says the wedding will take place as soon as the prince arrives.

Vilāsinī. May he come without hindrance.

Little Lotus. Amen to that.

Māgadhikā. Come, dear, let's sit in the room.

Vilāsinī. Yes, let's. The dusk is nearly gone; the moon is up.

Little Lotus. Spread a place for me too, dears.

Māgadhikā. But are you free? Wait on the princess till she goes to sleep.

Little Lotus. Very well.

[*Exeunt the two maidens.*]

[*Enter*[1] *Avimāraka carrying a rope disguised as a burglar and with a sword in his hand.*]

Avimāraka. [*Thoughtfully.*] Ah! Youth is a terrible thing. For—

Youth manifests passion and resorts to recklessness; takes no heed of difficulties but goes straight for rashness; goes its self-willed way caring nothing for the path of law, and overwhelms the clear intellect of those who know much better. (1)

How now? Shall I loiter in a matter that depends on me alone? For here—

I am familiar with the town and know the watchmen's strength.
'Tis nigh midnight, grim with darkness nought can pierce.
I have my sword as trusted friend. My mind's made up.
What need of long reflection? What could be difficult for me? (2)

Ah, how fearsome is the middle of the night! For now, all creatures are unconscious in their slumber, like babes in the womb. The palaces with people silent, fast asleep, seem sunk in meditation. Swallowed up by the encircling gloom the trees can be detected only by the touch. With its outlines blurred the whole world becomes invisible. (3)

'Tis now forsooth the night of doom.[2]

The streets are streams that bear along the darkness, the lines of houses look like shoals; the ten quarters are merged in gloom. This darkness one could swim across. (4)

[*Stepping round and listening.*] Ah! that sounds like strains of

[1] He appears to the audience, but he is still in the street.

[2] *Kāla-rātri.* Night of the dissolution of the universe.

music. Who, I wonder, is that man so happy at every hour, enjoying music with his beloved? Clearly he plays the lute himself. For—

The mansion is lofty and the lattices are closed, yet the sound of the strings resounds. To make it sound so clearly out of doors were past the power of a woman's finger-tips. (5)

But that is a woman singing. For—

The tone is soft but clear, the sound from mouth and nose. While the beat[1] is strong, the sound of clapping hands is mingled with the jingling of bracelets. (6)

[*Stepping and looking around.*] Ha! ha! Who is this other trying to appease his lady-love? His offence must be great if she is not appeased at such an hour as this. Or is she really content but wants an excuse? For—

With stammering tongue and a sob in her throat as if choked with tears, 'What am I to thee?' she asks, too lovingly. Her good nature makes her yield to her lover's will, but her woman's nature makes her say the most contrary things. (7)

What is this bird with a dreadful note? Ah, it is an owl. The man laughs. The lady is scared at the hoot of the owl and the poor fellow gets his embrace. This befits their age, but why should I be witness to other folks' affairs? Let's get about our business.

[*Steps around.*] But whom have we here on the market terrace talking so softly in tremulous whispers? The poor fellow is like me, chaste against his will.[2]

His attendants urge him to speak low, and he is alarmed at the jingle of a jewel. Overcome by passion, he complains that desire brings no joy. He desires an assignation but hesitates to keep it. (8)

[*Steps around.*] Ah, moonlight. No, it's not moonlight; it's lamplight from the windows of houses on both sides of the street. It's difficult here to hide oneself. Oh, here's a robber. For—

Glad to feel his loins well girt, his glances follow the sounds from others' houses. He moves at a run, but with an eye on the lamps and trembles at the sound of a step. (9)

Ho, I must avoid him. [*Stands on one side.*] The rascal has gone. Now we can get on.

[*Steps round.*] Oh, here are the guards! What am I to do now? Good, I have it! I'll go into that rogue's hall at the crossways. [*Crosses over and waits.*]

[1] Sarup takes *hetu* in the sense of 'impulse, passion'.

[2] Sarup. 'He is that poor student of ours.'

This sword of mine mocks at me running from timid watchmen. Nay, it is not the guards that trouble me. I came in here intent on achieving my design. (10)

The guards have gone. Who can guard against the man who guards himself?

Those who roam at night, be it from love, or greed, or passion, rely on courage, not the aid of many men. This wandering at night, witness of the cream of manly deeds, is full of danger, but delightful. (11)

Here is the royal palace. The wall is very strong and very high. This is where men use their girdle string. If the coping [1] holds, I am as good as in. I'll stand here and throw the rope. Obeisance to Prajāpati. Honour to all magic sprites! May Śiva, Śambara, and Bali smile on me. Darker be the night, and deeper sleep. May fortune favour me. May all obstructions disappear. Death to all that hinder. Victory to the Queen of Magic.

[*Throws the rope.*] Ha! the noose [2] has caught in the coping. See the power of destiny. The rope has stuck at the very first throw. This looks like success.

The blessed Prajāpati is almighty. For—

If an effort be made, what is the blame for not succeeding? And who ever succeeds that thinks the task beyond him? Heroes show their mettle by goodly efforts. Success depends on the dictates of destiny. (12)

Good, I will climb up by the rope. [*Climbs up and looks over.*] Oh, what a fine palace.

Huge as this palace is, its parts are arranged in symmetry. It appears compact, rising tier above tier, and with its series of mansions seems eager to pass from the earth into the clouds. (13)

But I must not stop here. Obstructions all come from watch-towers, gate-houses,[3] and the paths along the walls.[4] Well, I will get down with the same rope. [*Descends.*] Now, where shall I hide the rope? [*Reflects.*] Good, I have it. I'll cut it off and throw it in this elephants' stable.

[*Throws it in and steps around.*]

[1] Lit. 'Monkey-heads', alluding to the merlons on the crenellated wall.

[2] Lit. 'Crab-rope'. *Karkaṭaka* is applied to different objects. Could it mean a piece of wood fastened at the end of the rope? Cf. Daśa-Kumāra-Caritam, p. 77, l. 7.

[3] *Pratolī*. For the meaning see Vogel, *J. R. A. S.* 1906, p. 539.

[4] *Indrapatha*. 'Indra paths'—probably the paths for sentries along the walls, between turrets. Editor suggests 'Indramaha = dog', which is pointless. On the top of the wall he would be safe from dogs.

Hark, that is a lute with the soft melody of a damsel singing.
I'll go elsewhere.

Ha! a perfume made more pungent by the ichor of the royal elephants.
I'll wait a moment and then go on.

Lo, the light of lamps. The guards are spread out this way.
What's to do?

The palace has long been hushed in nocturnal slumber like the lotus beds. (14)

I'll go on. Here is the path she told me of. Here is the water-course.[1] This is the mound with trees. And this the audience hall. Ah, here is the palace of the princess. There is plenty of woodwork and the lattices are near the ground, so it will be easy to climb. Nay, but were it hard to climb—

How should I hesitate, intent on climbing up now that my longing has brought me nigh to my beloved? Who that is tortured with thirst would shun a lotus pool through fear of the thorns on the stalks? (15)

Well, I must get up. [*Climbs up.*] Here 's the lattice window the nurse described. [*Unbolts the window, steps in, and looks round.*] Bravo, Kuntibhoja, bravo! This palace makes heaven look ridiculous. For—

Swans are sleeping on jewelled slabs, gravel paths[2] are made of pearls and beryl, pillars branch with coral. What need of words? The lamps grow dim in the flashing of the gems. (16)

Away with this dreadful disguise. [*Takes off his burglar's dress and removes the cord round his waist.*]

Little Lotus. I wonder what has happened to the prince. When the princess heard her sweetheart would come to-night she actually fell asleep. She was too troubled to sleep before.

Avimāraka. [*Overhears and approaches quickly.*] Lady, see what has happened to me.

Little Lotus. [*Looking up joyfully.*] Welcome, Prince.

Avimāraka. [*Gazing in delight.*] This is she. At this sight—

Mine eyes are not content though caressing every limb; my heart is racing as though it would waken her from slumber. Love drives me on as if he would crush her in his arms. My inner soul is tranquil but faints with joy. (17)

Little Lotus. [*Aside.*] This is the Lord God of Love tormenting them

[1] *Mandākinī.* [2] *-pratānaḥ* (?) *v. l. pradhānāḥ.*

as a flood sweeps away the banks on either side. [*Aloud.*] Prince, pray grace this couch.

Avimāraka. Very well. [*Sits down.*]

Little Lotus. Shall I wake the princess?

Avimāraka. Good lady, restrain your youthful impetuosity. Look you—

I have but two eyes, not a thousand. My mind is in a maze from long-deferred desire. But to-day, when the shore is glimpsed across the flood of passion, let my two eyes enjoy this game over and over again. (18)

Little Lotus. Yes, I know your highness's solicitude for the princess.

Avimāraka. To-day my solicitude finds its reward.

Kuraṅgī. [*Waking.*] My dear, what did the cruel fellow say?

Little Lotus. I told you before, princess.

Avimāraka. Now have I gained the crown[1] of my life; that her mind is so confused.

Kuraṅgī. [*Aside.*] My wits are wandering. [*Aloud.*] What did I say, dear?

Little Lotus. You didn't say anything, princess.

Avimāraka. This intensity of her distraction distracts me once again.

Kuraṅgī. You've been sitting here a long time, Little Lotus. What's the time?

Little Lotus. It is now midnight.

Kuraṅgī. Then you must be tired. Come and clasp me in your arms.

Little Lotus. [*Aside to Avimāraka.*] Prince, I am busy rubbing her feet. Do you clasp the princess in your arms.

Avimāraka. [*Joyfully.*] Delighted, and may you too hear hundreds of words as sweet.

Kuraṅgī. Don't be too devoted. Come along.

Little Lotus. Princess, here I am.

Kuraṅgī. [*Catches hold of Avimāraka, pulls him towards her, and embraces him.*] Oh, but who is rubbing my feet?

Little Lotus. [*Whispering.*] It's like this.

Kuraṅgī. [*In confusion.*] Alas, my reputation is ruined, I am afraid.

Avimāraka. Thou art no stranger, love, to me because our hearts

have met. Why tremblest thou like a creeper smitten by the force of the wind? Banish fear, good lady, and be merciful to me. Why make a lengthy story? I come to thee a suppliant. (19)

[*Kuraṅgī looks bashfully at Little Lotus.*]

Little Lotus. Rise, your highness, rise. The princess begs you; rise.

[1] *Phalam*—'Fruit'.

Avimāraka. Very well. [*Gets up.*]

[*Enter the Nurse.*]

Nurse. Greeting, Prince.

Avimāraka. How are you, madam?

Nurse. Little Lotus, there's a couch prepared in the inner bower. Take them in there.

Little Lotus. Just so.

[*Exit Nurse.*]

Little Lotus. Prince, there's a couch prepared in the inner bower. Please take the princess there.

Avimāraka. May you too listen to hundreds of words as sweet.

[*Takes her hand in his. Gets up.*]

Little Lotus. Come, Prince, this way.

Avimāraka. Lo, here I come.

[*They both step round.*]

Avimāraka. [*Joyfully.*] Now have I discharged the debt of youth. For—

> Her eyes are swimming with happy tears; her bosom throbs beneath her hand. Though her hips are not too weighty, her dainty feet are tottering from bashfulness. Lo, here is the warrant of the seven steps, so is our union complete. Could this night endure a hundred æons, what man more fortunate than I?

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

INTERLUDE

[*Enter Māgadhikā with a basket in her hand.*]

Māgadhikā. How careless the maids are! Past sunrise and the terrace not yet done. I can't hear them chattering together. What can it mean? Ah, they must have been awake all night and have dropped off to sleep at dawn. I will just waken the princess. [*Steps around.*]

[*Enter Vilāsinī with a fan.*]

Vilāsinī. Stop, Māgadhikā, stop.

Māgadhikā. Don't stop me, my good girl. I have brought flower paste for the princess.

Vilāsinī. What does she want with flower paste or any kind of ornament?

Māgadhikā. Impudent girl! Don't say such unlucky things. Ever may the princess need her ornaments.

Vilāsinī. Nay, I meant to say her beauty is its own adornment.

Māgadhikā. Idiot! Even a flower has fragrance.

Vilāsinī. That's right. What's lovely in itself becomes still more lovely when adorned.

Māgadhikā. Ah, my dear, the prince is well matched with a beautiful mate.

Vilāsinī. Now, don't be partial. Before the prince she looks like a lotus in the sun.

Māgadhikā. You're right. I really think the God of Love incarnate looks like him.

Vilāsinī. That's why she can't do without him for a moment.

[*Enter Little Lotus in tears.*]

Little Lotus. It's a true word what people say—that joys are beset with troubles. Here's a year gone that the princess has found delight in unbroken joy. And, of course, we girls were in paradise. Now to-day I hear the king knows all about it, and my whole body has gone limp. And the princess, tormented by shame and fear and love, stupefied [1] by her trouble, is like someone in a faint. This palace seems to me as dismal as a lamp with the light blown out. Since the prince left [2] I haven't found a scrap of comfort. However, I am glad to hear he got away without difficulty. Now the princess's apartments are guarded all round. [*Steps round.*] Hullo, two of the girls. What is it, Māgadhikā?

Māgadhikā. Oh, how can you ask? You know it's the hour of the princess's toilet.

Little Lotus. The festival is over. [*Weeps.*]

The Two Maids. What, was it only a dream? Speak out; let us share your sorrow.

Little Lotus. The prince has gone—for ever.

Two Maids. Oh!

Little Lotus. I came out here because I couldn't bear to see the princess's trouble any longer.

[1] *Muddhā.* Sarup takes it in the more usual sense,—'simple girl'.

[2] Sarup thinks *virahidāe* refers to the princess. 'Since the prince left her, I haven't found her any comfort.'

Māgadhikā. One couldn't bear to see her present plight. So let us go and cheer her up.

Two Maids. Yes, let us do so.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Avimāraka.*]

Avimāraka. [*Sadly.*] With the last remnant of my luck I have managed to escape from the princess's palace. That is, my body has, for even now my heart has not come back to me, but held prisoner by that darling girl, leaves me in the lurch. (1)

In what plight can Kuraṅgī be?

Put to shame by the servants' chatter and closely guarded by the king, she will be afraid. At night, when she cannot find me, blinded by tears she will swoon away. Alas, what can I do? (2)

Ha, I see a way. In her regard for me she took no thought for herself. And so for her sake I must sacrifice my life. [*Steps round.*] I have been in exile only the last few days, and yet the torture of my body and my mind seems past bearing. For—

If I should leave that beautiful maid, so exquisite in the glory of fresh youth, whose artless love grew greater with familiarity, and be cheated into living even for a moment, what ingratitude in the world could be baser? (3)

And now the blessed sun with a thousand rays begins to corrode the body of a man whose heart is consumed by love. [*Looking all round.*] Ah, how dreadful is this heat. For now—

The earth is burning hot, as if in a high fever, all its moisture drawn off by the rays of the sun. The trees, through harbouring forest fires, have been robbed of their shade, and seem stricken with a wasting sickness. The mountains, gaping with their lofty caverns, cry helplessly for water, while the whole world, losing its senses in the baking rays of the sun, falls into a swoon. (4)

What shall I do now? I can go no farther. For—

Arid winds cover all with fiery sand. The trees are dropping down[1] discoloured leaves. The sun streams along melted by forest fires, and baked by the heat of the sun the world is cracking. (5)

[1] *Saṃsvedayanti*—lit. 'are all in a sweat with'. *Nagāḥ* may be 'mountains' as in verse 12.

Oh, my darling, beautiful maid, answer me.

[*Acts a swoon. Then revives and looks upward.*]

Why, the blessed sun with a thousand rays is obscured. Nay—

What wonder if the spreading clouds carried in the wind obscure the sun? The wonder would be if they could assuage the flame in my heart. (6)

What is the use of this living death? I shall abandon life. [*Rises, and steps round.*] Now what shall I do? Good, I see. I will drown myself in this forest pool. Nay, for shame this death of mine were ignoble. In a moment of pride I forgot the right path. I must try another way. [*Looking off.*] Good, I have it. Yonder forest fire seems fairly near. I will offer up my life in that. [*Approaching and saluting.*] Blessed Fire—

If Agni will bring to pass the wish of those devoted to one thing, in the next world, too, let her be my love, bringing fame to me alone. (7)

[*Enters the fire. In surprise.*] Why, what is this?

Burnt trees are falling with showers of sparks, but to me the flames are as cool as Malaya sandal paste. For as if fire took pity on a lovesick wight, it embraces me as a father hugs his son with joy. (8)

Can there be a greater miracle? The fire does not burn me. Now has this some natural cause?[1]

I must try in another way.

[*Steps round.*] Here is a lofty mountain.

Its summit merges in the masses of black clouds that cover it, and it forms a resting-place for troops of heaven's denizens. With all the varied charm a poet could conceive, ideal for friends to meet on, its riches all seem useless like those of a low-born king. (9)

So be it. On this rock will I abandon life. For a precipice brings all one can desire. I will climb up. [*Ascends and looks down.*] Here is a mountain pool. I will bathe therein, and, sipping it, recite a prayer. [*Does so.*]

[*Enter a Fairy*[2] *with his lady-love.*]

Fairy. Last night I passed in northern Kuru-land, and then I bathed in Mānasa. Then we frolicked[3] on the inner slopes of Mandara's glens, played hide and seek in Himalaya's caves, and

[1] *astikāraṇam.*

[2] *Vidyādhara*—a semi-divine being of magic power.

[3] *āmoditaṃ yauvanam.*

feasted our eyes on the view. Now we shall go to sandal trees of Malabar, delightful for a midday slumber. (10)

[*Gesticulates flying through the air.*]

Saudāminī, look. How beautiful is the distant earth. For now—

Mighty mountains look like little elephants and seas like swimming tanks. Trees resemble duckweed. All the hollows on the surface of the earth have disappeared. Streams are boundary lines, sumptuous mansions glistening drops. The whole world in its contracted form seems to be seen awry. (11)

Take heed, my love. We will go to Malaya, the home of cool sandal-wood trees.

Saudāminī. Very well, my lord.

[*They both gesticulate flying through the air.*]

Saudāminī. I can't go any further without a rest.

Fairy. Then we'll rest awhile on some mountain before we go on.

Saudāminī. I'd love to. [*Both descend.*]

Fairy. Look. Saudāminī, look—

Our swift descent makes it seem that the mass of clouds is flying from us while the sea-girt earth rushes up to meet us. These mountains coming into view are very bright, like clouds in the rainy season. (12)

Lady mine, this mountain seems suitable to entertain us for a while. So let us rest before we go on.

Saudāminī. Let us do so, my lord.

Fairy. Saudāminī, we have a right to take a sixth part of the flowers of these trees. So let us help them to pay their debt.

Sāudaminī. Very well, my lord.

[*They gesticulate picking flowers.*]

Fairy. [*Catching sight of Avimāraka.*] But who is this? I know. It must be some fairy that has lost his magic.[1] And why? Because no others have such beauty. I am glad I saw him. Come, I'll ask him what 's forgotten.

Avimāraka. Well, I've done my duty by the gods. I'll throw myself down. [*Looking sideways sees the fairy.*] Hullo, who is this? Nay, it must be a dream. But I am not asleep. Ah, but a man sees many things at the time of death. That must be it. Yet that happens to the stupidest people, and I know everything. Well, I'll ask him. Sir, of what lineage are you the ornament?

Fairy. Hearken. I am a fairy, Meghanāda by name, and this is my

[1] *mantra-bhraṣṭa.*

wife Saudāminī. The fairies hold a festival to-day on the Malaya mountain in honour of the holy sage Agastya. We are invited there. We have alighted here to rest awhile before going farther. That is all about us. But now how is it that you are turning this earth into paradise?

Avimāraka. [*Aside.*] Now, what shall I say? At the hour of death I must not tell a lie. [*Aloud.*] My name, sir, is Avimāraka, the son of the king of Sauvīra.

Fairy. [*Aside.*] That is untrue. This is no human form. [*Aloud.*] Then why have you come here all alone?

Avimāraka. [*Aside.*] What shall I say? [*Remains with his eyes downcast.*]

Fairy. [*Aside.*] Well, I must find out for myself. [*Applies his magical science.*] Alas! He is the son of the divine Agni, but does not know it. He fell in love with Kuraṅgī, Kuntibhoja's daughter, was enjoying her company when it was found out and he escaped. Finding no way of returning to her, he was bent on suicide, and climbed up here to throw himself down a precipice. She, too, in her place is suffering a living death. I must help him in this affair. [*Aloud.*] Avimāraka, friendship should be free from guile. You cannot conceal from me what I know already.

Avimāraka. Continue.

Fairy. From now on let us be friends. I know all about the state you are in. You climbed up here in order to abandon life. Now, didn't you?

Avimāraka. Yes, my friend, that is so.

Fairy. Good, I am delighted at your confidence. Now, if you had the means of getting back unbeknown, what would you do?

Avimāraka. [*Delighted.*] What do you think? Why, I should go straight in. That's the reason of my distraction.

Fairy. Well, my friend, look at this ring. [*Shows him a ring.*]

Avimāraka. Yes, comrade, what is the good of that?

Fairy. By wearing this ring on a finger of the right hand one becomes invisible; on the left hand as one was before.

Avimāraka. Oh, comrade, is it possible?

Fairy. Come, I will convince you. Say now, can you see me?

Avimāraka. Of course.

Fairy. Now pay attention.

Avimāraka. I'm all attention.

Fairy. [*Putting the ring on right hand.*] Can you see me, comrade?

Avimāraka. Even your shadow is invisible, not to speak of your body. How happy these people are—

That roam through the sky attended by their darlings, and sport on mountain slopes for all to follow. All things they know by magic powers, and wander at their ease, seen or unseen, as they please. (13)

Why, with that I were as good as in already.

Fairy. [*Putting the ring on his left hand.*] Then pray accept this ring.

Avimāraka. I am much obliged to you.

Fairy. No, no; 'tis I that am obliged. For—

The satisfaction that a good man feels on gaining a jewel is less than the joy of giving it to one that stands in need thereof. (14)

Avimāraka. I have only one doubt. It seems ungracious to say it, but if I might try it on myself.

Fairy. Then put it on a finger of your right hand.

Avimāraka. Very good. [*Does so.*]

Fairy. Comrade, take this sword.

Avimāraka. Very good. [*Takes the sword. In surprise.*] Oh, what a splendid sword!

It is a thunderbolt with its form invisible, or by some magic flashes of lightning have been welded into a sword. Eclipsing the brilliance of the sun it moves with a rush like a forest fire. (15)

Fairy. See the prowess of Agni's son. How few among the fairies even could endure the brilliance of this sword. Truly the God of Fire protects him.

Avimāraka. [*Looking at the sword.*] How powerful is the sacred lore.

I have attained to superhuman power. I am the same, distinguished with my proper qualities; and this is my body, while hosts of mortals less fortunate know nought thereof. (16)

Comrade, my task is done. Take the sword.

Fairy. As you wish.[1] It is certain that the man himself is invisible, and so is any one he touches and a third man touched by him.

Avimāraka. My friend, I am delighted. This is luck upon luck. But I am afraid I have delayed you. Do not let me detain you further.

Fairy. As I take leave of you, I'll be straightway there.

Avimāraka. What is the use of many words?

What return can be made by a man like me to those like you that have your magic powers? By restoring life to me thou hast made me thy chattel. Command me. What shall thy servant do? (17)

[1] This passage with the sword, which is returned, seems superfluous.

Fairy. I recognize your sincerity. And if you would fulfil my request—

Speak of me and of my lady to thy lady-love. Nor do thou forget me, friend, but watch for my coming. With merry sport beguile the princess, and at need I shall again be at thy side. (18)

Oh, he is the cream of manliness. My heart is loth to leave him. Comrade, we must go.

Avimāraka. Fare thee well. We shall meet again.

Fairy. Oh, yes.

[*Fairy rises in the air with his lady.*]

Avimāraka. [*Looking upwards.*] There goes the noble Meghanāda plunged in the ocean of the sky.

The breeze is tossing the locks on his brow. The unguent is swept from his limbs by the pressure of clefts in the clouds. Well girt with a sword in his girdle, his waist is hidden by the clinging hands of his youthful bride. His robe is tossed by the wind, and the stars are obliterated by jewels crowded on his diadem. And now the majestic magician grows smaller and smaller so fast in his flight through the air. (19)

And she, too, follows her beloved by magic power.

Side curls have worked loose with the speed. Her slender waist is wearied by the heaving of her bosom. With her lover's arm around her[1] she flashes in the sky and disappears like lightning in the clouds. (20)

The noble Meghanāda has gone. I must set out for the city this very day. I will climb down at once. [*Descends.*] I feel tired. I will rest awhile on this stone slab before I go on. [*Sits down.*]

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. Alas, how unlucky is Sugṛihīta, the Sauvīra King. For a long time he had no son. Then by divine favour and his own observance he obtained a fine son, such as mortals rarely get. Now he is no better off than before. For by the bad luck of his relatives and to the certain conclusion of my life, the prince has disappeared. [*Steps around.*] Only to-day her ladyship said that the prince departed safely. But who knows whether he is all right? He is very delicate, and has gone off alone tormented by love. Anyhow, I must find him, alive or dead, if I have to wander over the whole earth. If I don't find him in this world, I shall accompany his highness in the next. I am dead beat. I'll rest a bit in the shade of this tree before I go on. [*Sleeps.*]

1 Lit. 'with the upper part of her body given to her beloved'.

Avimāraka. In what plight, I wonder, is Santushṭa? If he has heard of my escape, all will be well. Otherwise the poor old brahman will perish. Without him all my plans will be in vain. For he is—

Droll to converse with, but a warrior in battle. A preceptor in sorrow and stout-hearted to face the foe, the great delight of my heart. In short, he is my other half. (**21**)

[*Looking all round.*] Hullo, who is this traveller asleep in the shade? [*Approaching.*] All at once it seems a load is lifted from my heart,[1] and I am all eager to embrace him.

Jester. [*Waking.*] I've had a long sleep. I must be going. What good is rest to the broken-hearted? [*Steps round and catches sight of Avimāraka.*] What! Prince Avimāraka?

Avimāraka. My dear Santushṭa! [*They embrace.*]

Jester. [*Laughing loudly.*] Tell me, comrade, what have you been up to all this time?

Avimāraka. My friend, just this. [*Puts the ring on his right hand and becomes invisible.*]

Jester. Hullo! Where's his highness got to? He is nowhere to be seen. Ah, my thoughts are always fixed upon him, and so I must have thought I could see him. Nay, but I will clear this up. Comrade, if you hide yourself I'll curse you.

Avimāraka. Here I am, comrade.

Jester. Where? Where?

Avimāraka. [*Changing the ring to his left hand.*] Why, here I am.

Jester. It used to be simple Avimāraka, but now it's magic Avimāraka. Well then, magician, why don't you go invisible to the princess's palace?

Avimāraka. I have only just got it.

Jester. Wonderful! wonderful! Where did it come from?

Avimāraka. I will tell you all about it in the ladies' chambers.

Jester. Now you are the greedy one.[2]

Avimāraka. Vaidheya, come at once to enter the arena.[3] Don't you let go of my hand.

Jester. Wonderful! wonderful! I, too, am invisible. Does my body exist or not? I'll spit. [*Does so.*]

Avimāraka. Idiot, don't delay. My heart runs forward to see my beloved. [*Drags him along.*]

Jester. I feel no confidence.

Avimāraka. What, must I wait till dinner-time?

Jester. Let's rest awhile before we go.

[1] Lit. 'the sunrise of my heart has come'.

[2] Or reading *mhi* for *si*—'I am ravenous now.'

[3] *prakṣepa-bhūmi*?

Avimāraka. Do you think Kuraṅgī has forgotten me?

Jester. Is she still alive—that ragged and blind old nun?

Avimāraka. Seriously, comrade, I request you. Pray, come at once.

Jester. Why are you in such a hurry, like a student going home at the end of his course?

Avimāraka. Idiot! Come along.

Jester. Don't drag me. I am running after you.

Avimāraka. [*Stepping around.*] Here is the city.

Jester. Yes, I can see what a beautiful city it is.

Avimāraka. Here is the king's palace.

Here stands the royal mansion. Erstwhile I entered it at night, mustering my daring, but full of apprehension. But now with magic's kindly aid I enter it by day without a tremor, as a clever rogue enters a group of worthy men. **(22)**

[*Stepping round.*] At this hour Kuraṅgī must have bathed and will be in her palace within.

Jester. Go here, go there. Dinner-time is passing.[1]

Avimāraka. Come, let us go into the inner rooms. [*Enters.*]

When the high-minded men have dwelt happily before in house or town, though anxious for an aim hard to attain, what happiness to return with hearts satisfied by their object gained and with something yet to be achieved. **(23)**

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

[*Enter Kuraṅgī and Little Lotus.*]

Little Lotus. Come, princess, don't torment yourself for ever. Let's go up to the terrace on the roof and admire the view.

Kuraṅgī. Ah, my dear, can you read my heart? For my servants don't understand, and, just to please me, bring the most fragrant flowers—*bakula, sarala, kadamba*[2]—and all the favourites of the rainy season.[3] They drive me mad. And these peacocks by our royal lake are much too keen on their bowing and scraping.[4] I've always petted them, yet they

[1] Lit. 'begging time'.

[2] Bakula (*Mimusops Elengi*), Sarala (*Pinus Longifolia*), Sarja (*Vatica Robusta*), Arjuna (*Terminalia*), Kadamba (*Nauclea Cadamba*), Nīpa (*Idem*?), Nicula (*Barringtonia acutangula*), &c.

[3] The rains being the happy season of lovers.

[4] 'Overdo the sycophantic business.'

show no sense of time or place, but needs must show off their superior art. The parrot-starling has started telling stories. This *maina*, knowing nothing of my trouble, comes to tell me the news of all the world. My retinue comes to ask about my health and is persistent in its gossip. So I should like to go on the terrace for awhile.

Little Lotus. As the princess pleases. Let us go.

[*They both go up.*]

Kuraṅgī. Oh, my dear, even here there's a great disadvantage—a black cloud coming up with its lightning lamp.

Little Lotus. Oh, princess, do not torture yourself. Look at that sky. The sun is shut in by dark clouds and the sky is made beautiful by a light shower of rain.

Kuraṅgī. Yes, it is a lovely sky.

[*Enter Avimāraka and the Jester.*]

Avimāraka. Comrade, I can see Kuraṅgī there—

> Wet with aloe and sandal, out of season, by reason of her malady, her ornaments laid aside, every playful gesture gone. She shines with natural charm, like a sacred text without the application. (1)

Jester. Ho, I am content. You used to think yourself the most beautiful person in all the world. Now you are surpassed by that lady's inherently delightful beauty. Separation from you, I think, has made her thinner. Even so she delights the eye like a digit of the new moon.

Avimāraka. Too bookish for words, my friend. How is that?

Jester. Ah, you're used to me and so you mock me. People who haven't seen me before and know nothing of my intelligence praise me highly. And I know that so well that I won't chum up with anybody in town.

Avimāraka. How can you be so indifferent? With so many people round my beloved I have had no opportunity to let her know. But now she has gone on to the roof. We will speak to her there.

Jester. Right you are. Let's go up on the roof.

Avimāraka. My friend, we must go up very carefully so as not to make a sound.

Jester. Oh, but it can't be done. Who can eat without spoiling what's left.[1] I'll stay here. You go up alone.

Avimāraka. If you let go, you will become visible.

[1] Anything left, when one person has helped himself, is *ucchiṣṭa*, a remnant, impure for any one else.

Jester. Oh, I had forgotten that. Tell me again and again.

Avimāraka. This way. [*Ascends and looks round.*] My friend, here is my beloved seated on a stone slab with Little Lotus.

Leaning her unhappy face on her left hand, she cannot endure this season with its passionate associations. Absorbed in thought she gazes upwards with eyes almost still and seeks to restrain her tears. (2)

Kuraṅgī. [*Aside.*] What's the good of this living death? [*Aloud.*] Little Lotus, go and fetch Māgadhikā with the bathing things.

Little Lotus. How can I leave your highness alone? There is nobody here.

[*Enter Hariṇikā.*]

Hariṇikā. To the princess, greeting. The queen asks, how is your headache now, and sends this medicine to rub on.

Kuraṅgī. Little Lotus, now you can go. I think it's just going to rain. I want to bathe in the fresh rainwater. So hurry up these things.

Little Lotus. As the princess bids.

Avimāraka. Now what is she up to?

Kuraṅgī. Come here, my dear.

Little Lotus. Here I am, princess.

Kuraṅgī. Is your body cool?

Little Lotus. I don't know.

Kuraṅgī. Come here and embrace me.

Little Lotus. So, princess. [*Embraces her.*]

Kuraṅgī. Yes, my dear, your body is very cool and delightful.

Little Lotus. Thank you, princess.

Kuraṅgī. Now the burning pain in my body seems to be vanishing. [*Aside.*] Alas, a loving farewell.[1] This is the last time that I shall clasp her in my arms. [*Aloud.*] Now, you can go.

Little Lotus. As the princess bids. [*Exit.*]

Hariṇikā. Princess, what shall I tell the queen?

Kuraṅgī. Tell her the pain is gone and I am well to-day.

Hariṇikā. And what shall I say if she questions me as to how I know?

Kuraṅgī. You know very well. Say it was through her excellent medicine.

Hariṇikā. As the princess bids. [*Exit.*]

Avimāraka. Now what has she in mind?

With burning sighs the slender maid keeps gazing all around.
Her eyes are full of tears. What does she mean to do? (3)

[1] Lit. I have shown my affection for my friend.

Kuraṅgī. Good, I'll hang myself with this robe. [*Gets up, and is about to do so when she hears a clap of thunder.*] Oh, save me, save me!

Avimāraka. My friend, I cannot bear it any longer. [*Changes the ring to his left hand.*] Beloved, have no fear. [*Lifts up Kuraṅgī.*]

Kuraṅgī. [*Joyfully.*] Can it be true? I am all in a maze.

Avimāraka. Beloved, put all doubt away. [*Embraces her.*]

Kuraṅgī. Wonderful! My burning pain has gone in a moment.

Avimāraka. Thus to clasp her in my arms,

Though constantly familiar through the union of our hearts, is even more delicious than our first meeting. To-day I'm like a king enjoying victory that he has won[1] by prowess in the van of battle. (4)

Jester. What, are they beginning to cry? Don't you worry too much or I shall cry too. No, not a single precious tear comes out of my eye. When my old dad died I began mighty hard to cry. But not a tear. What chance for somebody else's trouble? And yet, though I am not excited, I am weeping.

Avimāraka. Enough of your mockery. For true love has no guile.

No blame to me and none to thee if I should make thee laugh.
A wise man and a fool are much the same for any task in body not in mind. (5)

[*Enter Little Lotus.*]

Little Lotus. Hariṇikā, Hariṇikā! Why is the door locked? Alas, I am afraid she has fastened the door to free herself from pain. Hariṇikā, Hariṇikā! Oh, dear, that's what's happened.

Avimāraka. That sounds like the voice of Little Lotus. Comrade, unbolt the door.

Jester. As you command. [*Undoes the door.*] Come in, lady.

Little Lotus. Oh, who is this man?

Jester. How discerning you are! There is something queer about the palace. Nobody else takes me for a man. I'm an old woman.

Avimāraka. Come in, Little Lotus.

Little Lotus. What, the prince? Your highness, greeting! But who is this man?

Jester. I am a maidservant called Lily.[2]

Avimāraka. He is the brahman Santushṭa I have often told you about.

Little Lotus. Ah, I have seen this brahman before on the terrace of the city market.

[1] Reading *sāhasāpiaḥ*, suggested by editor.

[2] *Pukkhariṇī*; lit. 'Lotus Pool'.

Jester. Yes, lady. With my sacred thread I am a brahman; with my rags I am a friar.[1] If I take off my clothes I am a monk.[2] What have you there, lady?

Little Lotus. Things for the princess's bath.

Jester. What does she want with bathing things when she's crying with hunger? Go at once and fetch something to eat. I'll take the head of the table.

Little Lotus. Wretched brahman! Always thinking about something to eat. That can all wait. But how did the prince come in by day with the highroad crowded with men?

Avimāraka. Santushṭa will tell you all about it.

Little Lotus. With these courteous words I'm dismissed. Very well. I'll take him to the hall and hear his story with all my gossips. Come along, brahman. [*Drags him away.*]

Jester. Help! An outrage on a brahman!

Kuraṅgī. What a ridiculous old brahman he is!

Avimāraka. Do you hear that, old fellow? You're ridiculous.

Jester. Now who can say anything so incredible about me. I am not ridiculous, but her ladyship. Finding her situation so bad, she determined to do something desperate. Then she heard a clap of thunder, forgot all about her purpose, and fell in a heap.

Kuraṅgī. Oh, so they saw that too.

Little Lotus. I beg you, brahman, come this way.

Jester. I'll go if you'll promise to feed me. Very welcome is the food given to a new arrival.

Little Lotus. Come along. I'll give you all my ornaments.

Jester. Fine words butter no parsnips.[3] Give them into my hands.

Little Lotus. Very well. [*Takes off her jewels and gives them to him.*]

Jester. Listen, lady.

Little Lotus. Idiot of a brahman! I'll sit in the hall with the other girls and hear it there.

Jester. I'll take leave of the princess and then I'll come.

Little Lotus. Who do you think you are? You've taken all my jewellery, so now you're my fancy man. Come along at once. [*Seizes him.*]

Jester. Don't do that, lady. I am very tender.

Little Lotus. I know all about your tenderness. If you are, come along, quick.

Jester. Oh, lady, here I come.

[1] A *raktapaṭa* (red cloth) mendicant.
[2] Presumably a Jain monk.
[3] Lit. 'The word "butter" does not remove bile.'

Avimāraka. Darling, look at those dark clouds, so welcome at the beginning of the rains and exquisitely beautiful. For—

Beauteous are these dark blue clouds, like dancers acting many parts to the drumming of the thunder in the rains. The kine of Him that wields the thunderbolt—curtains of the host of stars—Anthill homes of those she-snakes the lightning flashes—Bushes growing on the celestial road—Hones for the Love God's arrows—They guarantee the favours of the sulkiest of damsels. Water-jars to bathe the mountains, they bring us alms, water from the sea—Bars to hold the sun and moon—and cisterns of heaven's shower-bath. (6)

Kuraṅgī. Yes, my lord, they are beautiful now.

Avimāraka. The showers are heavy and then light. So—

The clouds resound like waves of heaven's ocean. Showers drop down as if they grew out from the clouds. Lightning flashes like the frowns of demon ladies. The season has come when lovers press the rounded breasts of early youth. (7)

Kuraṅgī. My lord, it 's beginning now to rain.

Avimāraka. Come, darling, we will go within.

Kuraṅgī. [*Joyfully.*] As my lord commands.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

ACT VI

INTERLUDE

[*Enter the Nurse.*]

Nurse. Oh, what a fickle thing is fate! First of all the princess was selected by his majesty the king of the Sauvīras for his son Vishṇusena. And now she is united with somebody of unknown descent, though indeed his remarkable qualities and appearance are rare in this mortal world. And then, if you please, comes Jayavarman, prince of Benares, brought here by the minister Bhūtika, with Queen Sudarśanā as well, to stay in the palace. The king of Benares couldn't come because he was busy with a sacrifice. Now what on earth is going to happen next?

[*Enter Vasumitrā.*]

Vasumitrā. Drat these crotchety astrologers! They only think of some particular constellation and don't understand what's really important. The prince has only arrived to-day, and they have gone and

fixed to-day for the wedding. [*Steps round.*] Now, what's wrong with Jayadā here? What's she thinking about that she looks so cross and worried? Jayadā, the queen wants you to go to her.

Nurse. Do you know what for?

Vasumitrā. What could it be but to consider what's to be done about this business?

Nurse. What is the queen's present inclination?

Vasumitrā. She doesn't want to marry the princess to Jayavarman until we get some news of Vishṇusena, who is a relation of hers. And the king too is very troubled at hearing nothing about the Sauvīra prince.

[*Enter Little Lotus.*]

Little Lotus. It seems as if all our difficulties had conspired to come together this very day. [*Stepping and looking round.*] Why, there is my mother discussing something with Vasumitrā. I'll go up and hear the bad news.

Vasumitrā. Oh, come here, Little Lotus. You're thick with the chamberlain, so you know all the news of the palace.

Little Lotus. The very latest. That's what I've come to tell you.

Vasumitrā. Speak out, my child.

Little Lotus. The ministers of the king of the Sauvīras have sent a messenger to inform our king that their secret agents have found out that their king is living in disguise with his wife and son in our city.

Nurse and Vasumitrā. What, living in disguise? Go on.

Little Lotus. When the king heard all this and had looked at the end of the letter he went out with the noble Bhūtika to search for him.

Nurse. I wonder what will happen.

Vasumitrā. Little Lotus, you'd better go inside.

Little Lotus. As madam says. [*Exit.*]

Vasumitrā. Come along. Let us see the queen.

Nurse. Yes, let us do so.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Kuntibhoja with the king of the Sauvīras and Bhūtika.*]

Kuntibhoja. My friend—

Meeting again after so long, why doest thou gaze at my face?
Bring to mind our childhood's days and embrace me closely.
With my delight in gazing intently at thee affection seems
to-day to have renewed our friendship. (1)

King of the Sauvīras. As you will. [*They embrace.*]

Kuntibhoja. Thy mind would seem oppressed by trouble. Thy speech is faltering and choked with tears. Thine eyes are wet; thy face is sad. Why this agitation at a time of joy? (2)

Sauvīra. Do not think I am not delighted to see you again. But my love for my son is so strong.

My sorrow for my son hidden in my heart now shows itself, and gaining thee to aid, bubbles forth in tears. (3)

Kuntibhoja. How do you mean? Sorrow for your son?

Bhūtika. Be it known to your Majesty—the prince has not been seen for a whole year.

Sauvīra. My love for my son is so strong. Look you—

It is for my boy I grieve to-day, for Avimāraka, matchless in strength, in courage, and in beauty. Were he but here, his locks anointed[1] with the dust from thy feet, who were happier than I? (4)

Bhūtika. [*Aside.*] His great sorrow about the prince grows greater. I will put an end to it. [*Aloud.*] How did this misfortune befall your Highness?

Kuntibhoja. In my distraction I quite forgot to ask you that.

Sauvīra. Listen. Nay, Bhūtika knows all about it. Or do you wish to hear it from my mouth?

Kuntibhoja. We are all attention.

Sauvīra. There is a divine sage known as Caṇḍabhārgava—a very irascible person.

Kuntibhoja. We have heard of him—a treasure-house of penance.

Sauvīra. He came to my kingdom. In the forest a tiger attacked and killed his pupil.

Kuntibhoja. And then?

Sauvīra. I was hunting at the time and happened to come to the place that very moment.

Kuntibhoja. Go on.

Sauvīra. When he saw me he flew into a rage, blazing with the fire of wrath, his face distorted by his scowling brows, his long matted locks hanging loose, and his hand upon the boy. He wouldn't listen to a word I said but, stuttering with rage, began to abuse me in every way.

Kuntibhoja. What did you do?

Sauvīra. Then by the predominance of what is destined to take place I became impatient and lost my temper and said, 'You say nothing of the facts and abuse me without cause'.

[1] Reading *añjita* for *añcita* ('curled').

Thou doest not say what's happened but fliest into a rage. Without cause doest thou abuse me as thou wilt. Unworthy vessel of penance thou, by reason of thine anger, in form a sage divine; in fact, a savage fed on dogs.[1] (5)

Kuntibhoja. You shouldn't have said that.

Sauvīra. When he heard that, his eyes blazed out like the fire when they pour the butter in. 'What, what!' he cried, shaking his head several times, and then he began to lay a curse upon me.

Whereas a great sage divine like me has been styled an outcast, so shalt thou with wife and son sink to the level of outcasts. (6)

Kuntibhoja. Ah, how a little thing may lead to the misfortune of the great.

Bhūtika. There is good fortune for the Sauvīra's royal house. For—

The wrathful sage converted you into an outcast, and yet by that form all was not burnt to ashes. (7)

Kuntibhoja. Well said. Pray proceed.

Sauvīra. Then I was disturbed in my mind by that imprecation, and after I besought him for a long time he gradually regained his normal composure and granted a favour.

While thou livest in disguise a year shall pass. When the year is over thou shalt be free of the ban. (8)

With those words he became cheerful and shouted 'Come along, Kāśyapa', and the lad who had been mauled by a tiger got up and followed him. A whole year I have lived as an outcast. To-day I am freed from the curse.

Kuntibhoja. What a rise and fall of trouble! I congratulate you.

Bhūtika. Victory to your Highness!

Kuntibhoja. Have Vishṇusena's mother and her retinue gone to the ladies' court?

Bhūtika. Her ladyship has gone within and revives the affection so long asleep.

Kuntibhoja. But tell me now how did Vishṇusena become Avimāraka?

Bhūtika. Hearken, my lord; there was a demon called Smoke-banner.[2] Roaming about to slaughter the whole world he once began to destroy the Sauvīras' kingdom.

Kuntibhoja. What a strange story. Proceed.

Bhūtika. When the king saw the distress of all his subjects and was unable to find a remedy against the demon he was sorely troubled.

[1] *Śvapāka*—a dog-cooking outcast.

[2] Dhūmaketu.

Kuntibhoja. Go on.

Bhūtika. Now Prince Vishṇusena—who knew all about it—was romping with children of his own age, his side curls hanging loose, and his limbs all white with dust from the ground. And suddenly by the power of fate, while his guards were not looking, he came to the place where that demon happened to be.

Kuntibhoja. How wonderful! What happened then?

Bhūtika. The demon was delighted to see the prince, regarding him as a dainty morsel, and began to set about his business.

Kuntibhoja. Oh, the cruel demon! What then?

Bhūtika. The prince gave a little laugh—

Then the prince unarmed, fighting as in play, slew that ogre even as a flying thunderbolt smites a mighty mountain or a forest fire destroys a woodland region. (9)

Kuntibhoja. At the very first in the confusion about the elephant I said he was of divine descent and could not be a mortal.

Sauvīra. With your spies, sir, you have a thousand eyes. What do you think about Avimāraka?

Bhūtika. My lord—

Every accessible country have I had thoroughly explored, and nowhere have my agents seen the prince. There remains the power of the mind to find him out, and doubtless he resorts to magic. (10)

[*Enter Nārada.*[1]]

Nārada. With verses from the Veda I propitiate the grandsire, Brahmā, with songs make Hari thrill with joy. Day by day with various devices I produce melodies for strings and quarrels in the world. (11)

Duryodhana, the father of Kuntibhoja, honoured us for many years. Since he passed to the common lot of mortals Kuntibhoja acts as our attendant. To-day Kuntibhoja and the king of the Sauvīras are in great difficulty owing to the disappearance of Avimāraka. So now I have descended on the earth to remove their anguish by revealing Avimāraka. [*Stands in front of Kuntibhoja and the king of the Sauvīras.*]

Kuntibhoja. Oh, here is the divine sage Nārada. I salute your reverence.

Nārada. May all go well with you.

Kuntibhoja. I thank you.

[1] The celestial busybody who so often set people by the ears but sometimes puts things right.

Sauvīra. Reverend sir, I salute you.

Nārada. Peace be with you.

Sauvīra. I thank you.

Kuntibhoja. [*Whispering.*] Bhūtika, will you please . . .

Bhūtika. As my lord commands. [*Exit and returns.*] Here is refreshment and water for the feet.

Kuntibhoja. Reverend sir, do us the favour.

Nārada. Very well.

Kuntibhoja. [*With a gesture of adoration.*] Reverend sir, your visit has purified our house.

Sauvīra. Now am I indeed freed from the curse at the sight of the divine sage.

Nārada. I have not come here at this moment merely to see you. I came down because I knew of the trouble that has come to you through the disappearance of Avimāraka.

Both Kings. If that is so, our sorrow is removed.

Nārada. Bhūtika, bring Sudarśanā here.

Bhūtika. As your reverence commands. [*Exit and re-enter with Sudarśanā.*]

Sudarśanā. Has the divine sage arrived?

Bhūtika. That is so.

Sudarśanā. Now my son's marriage is under good protection. [*Approaching.*] Your reverence, my greeting.

Nārada. Even so, fortunate lady, may you ever attain happiness.
And may king Kuntibhoja ever be overwhelmed with joy. (**12**)

Sudarśanā. I thank you.

Nārada. Now you two may ask me questions.

Both Kings. We thank you.

Kuntibhoja. Sir, is the Sauvīra prince alive?

Nārada. Yes.

Sauvīra. Why is he nowhere to be seen?

Nārada. Because of the distractions of marriage.

Sauvīra. What, is the prince married?

Kuntibhoja. In what place?

Nārada. In the city Vairantya.

Kuntibhoja. Is there another town called Vairantya? Well, whose son-in-law is he?

Nārada. Kuntibhoja's.

Kuntibhoja. Who is he?

Nārada. Kuraṅgī's father, lord of Vairantya city, Duryodhana's
son, thyself Kuntibhoja. (**13**)

Kuntibhoja. No need of many questions. You say the prince has married my daughter Kuraṅgī.

Nārada. Quite so.

Kuntibhoja. I feel ashamed. Who gave her in marriage and how? How did he enter the princess's palace?

Nārada. Destiny gave her in marriage. He saw her first in the confusion about the elephant. He entered first by daring, afterwards by magic. (14)

Kuntibhoja. Be it so. There is no answer to the dictum of a sage. Reverend sir, is it now an auspicious time for the prince and Kuraṅgī? First of all, their wedding should be celebrated.

Nārada. The wedding has taken place—a love marriage by mutual consent. Now—

Kuntibhoja. I want the ceremony with fire as witness.

Nārada. It has fire as an eternal witness. Still, to satisfy your relations, you may have the ceremony performed by the priest in accordance with the family tradition. Then at once bring the prince here with his bride.

Kuntibhoja. Sir, I'll go at once.

Nārada. Nay, stay. Do you go, Bhūtika.

Bhūtika. As your reverence commands. [*Exit.*]

Kuntibhoja. Sir, I have something to tell.

Nārada. This way then. Speak out freely.

Kuntibhoja. I have already promised Kuraṅgī's hand to Jayavarman, the son of Queen Sudarśanā, and invited the queen here with her retinue. Tell me, what am I to do now?

Nārada. I will see to it. Stand aside a moment.

Kuntibhoja. Very well. [*Does so.*]

Nārada. Sudarśanā, come here.

Sudarśanā. Here I am, your reverence.

Nārada. Did you hear what we were saying?

Sudarśanā. I heard the praises of the Sauvīra prince.

Nārada. Nay, say not so. Have you forgotten your first-born, the Fire-God's son?

Sudarśanā. Oh, do you know that too?

Nārada. Attend to what I say.

Sudarśanā. I will do so. Tell me.

Nārada. This is your son by the Fire-God. The son of your sister Sucetanā died at birth. You gave your own son to your sister. The king of the Sauvīras was delighted, performed ceremonies in keeping with his affection, and named the boy Vishṇusena. He grew up with

superhuman beauty, strength, courage, and energy; and because he killed a demon in the form of a sheep the people called him Avimāraka ('Sheepkiller'). Then he was degraded by the sage's curse. He saw Kuraṅgī on the day of the excitement about the elephant, fell in love with her, and married her with remarkable daring. Kuraṅgī's appearance made the palace guards suspicious, but while they were searching for Avimāraka, he was concealed by the God of Fire and escaped. In great sorrow he threw himself into a fire, but his father Agni embraced him tenderly. So as fire did not burn him, he climbed a mountain in order to throw himself down a precipice.

Sudarśanā. Oh, how dreadful!

Nārada. There some fairy, charmed by the very sight of him, gave him out of affection a ring of invisibility. If he wears it on his right hand he becomes invisible; if on his left hand he resumes his natural form.

Sudarśanā. How marvellous!

Nārada. Then, wearing the ring on his right hand and accompanied by a brahman named Santushṭa, he entered Kuntibhoja's daughter's palace as if it was his own house, and lived at his ease, enjoying Kuraṅgī's company to his heart's content—that's the story. Now, what is to be done?

Sudarśanā. My mind is agitated about the lady who has been deceived, but I find it delightfully interesting. Kuraṅgī, you know, sir, has been spoken of the last few days as the wife-to-be of Jayavarman. From to-day on she is entitled to his respect.[1]

Nārada. Your words are worthy of you. How indeed can an elder's bride be given to a younger brother? Sudarśanā, tell the king of Benares that Kuraṅgī is too old for Jayavarman. Kuraṅgī has a younger sister, Sumitrā. She shall be Jayavarman's wife.

Sudarśanā. The sage's word is accepted.

Nārada. Now go over to Kuntibhoja.

Sudarśanā. As your reverence commands.

[*Enter Avimāraka in wedding robes, Kuraṅgī, and Bhūtika.*]

Avimāraka. This affair makes me rather ashamed.

Those who saw me then in the business with the elephant and praised my powers, will they not accuse me of misbehaviour when they hear this story? (15)

[*Steps round and sees Nārada.*]

Why, here is the blessed Nārada.

His mind is set on praise and imprecation; his voice melodious

[1] As his elder brother's wife.

in Vedic texts and songs. He toils to sow discord among the closest friends and sets things right when all seems lost. (16)

Kuntibhoja. This way, Prince. Salute the divine sage, guardian of our house.

Avimāraka. Reverend sir, I salute you.

Nārada. May you and your wife be prosperous.

Avimāraka. I thank you. [Uncle, I salute you.

Kuntibhoja. Come here, my child.

With kindness conquer holy brahmans; with compassion conquer your retainers; with knowledge of the truth conquer thyself, and with courage conquer kings.[1]] (17)

Avimāraka. I thank you.

Kuntibhoja. Come, boy, salute your father.

Avimāraka. Oh, father dear, I salute you.

Sauvīra. Come here, my child—

Splendid in thy bridegroom's dress, thy bright face intent on saluting thy elders. Like us, mayest thou some day gaze upon thy son with eyes full of tears of joy. (18)

My son, salute your uncle.

Avimāraka. Uncle, I salute you.

Kuntibhoja. Come here, my child.

With constant auspicious sacrifices be thou like Hari. With truth inflexible be thou Daśaratha's equal. And be thou like thy father with unending[2] charity in thy self and worthy prowess. (19)

Sauvīra. My son, salute Queen Sudarśanā.

Kuntibhoja. Nay, that is not right. He should first salute Sucetanā.

Nārada. There is a reason why it should be Sudarśanā.

Both Kings. Agreed.

Avimāraka. Lady, I salute you.

Sudarśanā. My son, long may you live with this your bride. [*Embraces him.*] 'Tis so long since I saw you that I feel to-day once more the joy of having a son. [*Weeps.*]

[**Kuntibhoja.** This lady with eyes full of wonder and wet with tears and bosoms swelling with affection[3] appears to me the real mother, though this was not revealed by Sucetanā, who now ranks but as his foster-mother. (20)]

[1] He salutes his uncle further on. Spurious, as Weller notes.

[2] Reading *nityārpitaiḥ* with editor.

[3] Lit. 'With her two breasts streaming with milk.' Weller, following Jacobi, omits the verse as spurious.

Nārada. A truce to sentiment. Now let them go within, Sucetanā the wise and Sudarśanā the beautiful,[1] with her son and his bride.

Kuntibhoja. As your reverence commands.

Sudarśanā. As his reverence bids.

Nārada. The king of the Sauvīras should soon depart and go to his own country. Let Sumitrā be given to Jayavarman, prince of Benares.[2] And, Kuntibhoja, do you be ever at my right hand.

Kuntibhoja. I thank you.

Nārada. Kuntibhoja, what other favour can I show to you?

Kuntibhoja. If your reverence is pleased with me, what else can I desire?

Ever prosperous be priests and kine. And all subjects in the world be happy.

Nārada. Sauvīra, what further favour can I offer you?

Sauvīra. If your reverence is pleased with me, what else can I desire?

May our king rule this earth clad in blue robes of the mighty oceans. (21)

EPILOGUE

May the kine be without blemish, and, subduing the sovereignty of his foes, may our Lion King rule over this earth in its entirety.[3]

[1] *Sucetanā sucetanā sudarśanā sudarśanā ca.* A poor pun, probably spurious. Sucetanā is not on the stage.

[2] Lit. King of Benares, but his father is still alive.

[3] Identical with the epilogue of *The Minister's Vow*, vol. i, p. 35. Perhaps verse 21 was the original epilogue here.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE BOY KṚISHṆA

(*Bāla-caritam*)

INTRODUCTION

THIS play is based on a number of incidents in the early life of Kṛishṇa, leading up to the death of the wicked king Kaṃsa. Modern works on this subject are mainly based on the versions found in the Harivaṃśa, the Vishṇupurāṇa, and the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. The main story is of course much older than these works. When our dramatist differs from the usual version it is a question how far the difference is due to his own originality and how far it is due to an earlier and more popular form of the story.

This much is common to all versions. Some demon was born as the wicked Kaṃsa, who imprisoned the old king of Mathurā. Kṛishṇa, an incarnation of Vishṇu, was born to overthrow the wicked Kaṃsa. Kṛishṇa was the son of Devakī, sister or cousin of Kaṃsa. The wicked king knew there was a prophecy that he would be killed by a child of Devakī. So he had Devakī's children destroyed. At last the eighth (or seventh) child was hidden and brought up unknown to Kaṃsa, among the herdsmen. This child was Kṛishṇa, Vasudeva's son whom the herdsmen called Dāmodara. The divine child performed many marvels, slew Kaṃsa, and set free the old king of Mathurā.

In this play there are features not found in the late epic and purānic stories. For instance, the portents after Kṛishṇa's birth, the great weight of the baby, the brilliant light and the gushing of water from the sand; the introduction of Cāṇḍāla maidens, the bad king's Fortune, of Kārtyāyanī and Vishṇu's weapons. It has been urged[1] that the absence of the erotic element, so familiar in later descriptions of Rādhā and the Gōpīs, indicates an older version. On the other hand it might be suspected that Vishṇu's weapons have been introduced by the later hand of a pious Vaishnavite.[2]

In the First Act Nārada, the lover of music and strife, is brought on as a sort of chorus to introduce Devakī with her baby and her husband Vasudeva. Vasudeva carries the baby out of Mathurā by night.

[1] H. Weller, Introduction to German translation, p. 13.

[2] Compare the Weapons scene in *The Embassy*.

Describing the darkness he recites the famous verse I. 15 *Limpatīva* ... which recurs in *Cārudatta in Poverty,* I. 19. The child produces light to show the way. The Jamna is in flood, but the waters divide for them to pass. Vasudeva comes across the herdsman Nandagopa carrying a dead girl-baby, daughter of his wife Yaśodā. Nandagopa is persuaded to substitute the boy Krishṇa, but finds him too heavy to lift. Then the action is interrupted by the incursion of Garuḍa and the weapons, who recite verses about their prowess, and announce their intention of going to the herdsmen's station disguised as cowherd boys. The Discus asks Krishṇa to make himself lighter, and the weapons and Garuḍa disappear. The passage is clumsy, and the Act reads better without it.

Nandagopa goes off with the boy, and Vasudeva finds the little girl is alive, and determines to take her to Devakī, the better to deceive Kaṃsa. (ACT I.) The wicked king Kaṃsa has strange visions. Young outcaste women plague him. Then comes the Seer's curse to warn him, and disputes the ground with the king's Good Fortune, who leaves him, at Vishṇu's command, to the tender mercies of Curse, Bald-head, Yellow-eye, and other spectres. The king thinks he has been dreaming, but is troubled by bad omens. He sends for Vasudeva, who tells a lie, that Devakī has been delivered of a daughter. The king determines to kill the girl, and dashes her upon 'Kaṃsa's stone'. The child is transformed into a goddess of destruction. As Kārtyāyanī, she enters with a Serpent, Spear, and other figures. They recite verses, and decide to disguise themselves as cowherds. The king goes out to make an offering of expiation. (ACT II.)

In an Interlude the Old Herdsman tells us of many of the Boy's pranks and exploits. Then Dāmodara, as they call him, comes on to lead a rustic dance. He is interrupted by the Dreadnought Bull, really a demon, whom he slays. Then he gets news of the serpent Kāliya. (ACT III.)

The Fourth Act is devoted to the struggle with the serpent Kāliya, while the girls and herdsmen look on from a distance. At the end they are invited by the king to a great festival, the Consecration of the Bow. Dāmodara announces his intention of killing Kaṃsa. (ACT IV.)

The wicked king has heard disturbing tales of Dāmodara's prowess, and determines to have him smashed by a wrestler in the ring. News is brought of Dāmodara's entry into Mathurā, how he robbed the *dhobis,* killed an elephant that was set upon him, cured the humpbacked maiden, killed the guardian of the archery hall, and broke the Bow in two. The king's two prize-fighters boast of their strength, but are defeated

by Dāmodara and his elder brother Saṅkarshaṇa.[1] Then Dāmodara leaps into the king's balcony, seizes Kaṃsa by his hair, and throws him down, smashed to pieces.

Vasudeva addresses the citizens, and the old king Ugrasena is restored to the throne. Nārada comes in to worship Vishṇu in the form of Dāmodara. (ACT V.)

There is in this play a curious blend of ferocity and mildness. The Bull is slain on the stage, but he has guessed the identity of his victor and says, 'If I am slain by Vishṇu I shall go to heaven'. (III. 13.) The frightful Serpent is hauled out of his pool, but he departs penitent, promising to take the poison out of the water he has defiled. (IV. 12.) A dead child is left on the ground, but comes to life again. (ACT I.) Then the girl is dashed upon the stone before our eyes, but arises as a goddess. (II. 17.) The two prize-fighters and the wicked king are ruthlessly slaughtered, but rapidly in two verses. (V. 10, 11.) The consequent excitement is soon quieted, and the herdsmen restore the old king to the throne.

King Kaṃsa himself is driven by the curse, and has to summon all his courage to kill the child (II. 17), and goes out to make a great offering of expiation. (II. 25.) He meant to have Dāmodara put out of the way by his pugilists, but he is by no means represented as a complete demon like Rāvaṇa.

[1] Born of Rohiṇī, Vasudeva's other wife. In the Harivaṃśa Saṅkarshaṇa-Balarāma is the seventh son of Devakī, transferred to Rohiṇī's body to deceive Kaṃsa. In this play Kṛishṇa is the seventh son of Devakī. This is simpler and more artistic.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In the order of their appearance.)

Stage-manager. In Prologue.
Nārada, divine sage and busybody.
Devakī, wife of Vasudeva, mother of Kṛishṇa.
Vasudeva, father of Kṛishṇa.
Nandagopa, headman of the cattle station, foster-father of Kṛishṇa.
Garuḍa, the fabulous bird, the vehicle of Vishṇu (or Kṛishṇa).
Discus, one of Vishṇu's weapons. Cakra.
Bow, Śāraṅga, another of Vishṇu's weapons.
Club, Kaumodakī, another of Vishṇu's weapons.
Conch, Śaṅkha.
Sword, Nandaka.
Cāṇḍāla women.
KING OF MATHURĀ, Kaṃsa the wicked usurper, brother or cousin of Devakī.
Curse of the seer Madhuka. 'Arms of Thunderbolt.'
FORTUNE, Śrī, the king's good fortune.
(Other spectres—Ill-luck, Baldhead, Midnight, Deep-sleep, and Yellow-eye do not speak.)
Portress, Yāśodharā.
Chamberlain, Bālāki.
Nurse.
Kārtyāyanī, the goddess Dūrgā, arising from the body of the daughter of Nandagopa and Yaśodā.
Pot-belly, Kuṇḍodara, the serpent in the goddess's train.
Spear, the goddess's weapon.
Speed of Thought, another figure in the goddess's train.
Nīla, Dark-blue.
Old Herdsman.
Dāmaka, a herdsman.
Girls—*gopīs* of the cattle station.
Belle of the station, Ghoshasundarī.
Wood garland, Vanamālā.
Crescent, Candralekhā.
Gazelle, Mṛigākshī.
DĀMODARA, KṚISHṆA.

Saṅkarshaṇa, 'Plougher'. Halāyudha or Balarāma. Kṛishṇa's elder brother, born of Rohiṇī.
Meghanāda, a herdsman.
(Other herdsmen—Meghadatta, Bull, Pott, and Herder—do not speak separately.)
Dreadnought Bull, Arishṭa-vṛishabha.
Kāliya, a Nāga or Serpent.
Servant of King Kaṃsa, Dhruvasena.
Another Portress in Kaṃsa's palace, Madhurikā.
Cāṇūra, a pugilist.
Boxer, a pugilist, Mushṭika.
Ugrasena, the former king of Mathurā, imprisoned by Kaṃsa.

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening enter the Stage-Manager.*]

Stage-Manager. For ever and ever may that God protect you—who, with a body white as milk or conch, of old was named Nārāyaṇa in the golden age; who shone like gold and measured the triple world, entitled Vishṇu in the silver age; who dark as *dūrvā* grass slew Rāvaṇa, and was called Rāma in the copper age; who now is black like collyrium, Dāmodara in the age of iron.[1] (1)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you . . . But what is that? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

I, that roam in the sky . . .

Stage-Manager. So be it—I understand.

There falls a shower of blossom. The celestials' instruments resound. Here comes Nārada swiftly to see Hari born in the Vṛishṇi clan. (2) [*Exit.*]

END OF THE PROLOGUE.

ACT I

[*Enter Nārada.*]

Nārada. I, that roam in the sky, renowned in all three worlds have come from highest heaven, Nārada, lover of strife. (3)

Ha! Now that the battles of the gods and the demons have come to an end, I find no enjoyment in a sky that is always calm. For in my leisure from study of scripture I strike the strings and stir up strife. (4)

Moreover, I have great faith in my grandsire's words and respect for all the penance groves. Sooth to say, I love the lute touched by finger tips, and enmity and dreadful bitter quarrels. (5)

So I have come here to see the Lord Nārāyaṇa, who has been born in the Vṛishṇi clan in order to help the world by slaying Kaṃsa. Nārāyaṇa,

[1] The four ages *yugāni*, Kṛita, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali, the names of which are connected with those of throws of dice, i.e. nothing, three, two, or one over, when divided by four. Dāmodara is a name of Kṛishṇa.

the beginning of the Universe, unceasing and imperishable. Ah, here is the lady Devakī. In her arms she holds the lord of the triple world transformed by magic power into a child. She is coming slowly from her house with Vasudeva.

Here she comes by night with her pale face,[1] oppressed by sorrow but resigned, carrying in her arms as it were a mighty mountain,[2] the Lord of Gods, Refuge of worlds, the Wielder of the Discus and Destroyer of Demons. (6)

Here is the blessed Nārāyaṇa—

He is the Ancient that supports all living things, the Banner of the Triple Word, Creator of the Universe. His large eyes are lovely as the lotus, but his strength is limitless. Master of the mighty gods he strikes down the power of demons. (7)

Ha, here we have the very root of strife. I will circumambulate the blessed Nārāyaṇa and then return to highest heaven. Salutation to the Blessed One, Cause of all the Universe—

Obeisance to Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Protection of the world of men. Obeisance to Him with the white lotus eyes, Mask of all the World, a Rāma to put out the light of Rāvaṇa, the warrior that is the source of valour, the Best of All. (8)

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter Devakī with a child in her arms.*]

Devakī. Ah me! When my child was born I beheld the wondrous signs that will proclaim his greatness. Yet when I think of the accursed Kaṃsa's[3] cruelty, I cannot believe them, so unfortunate am I. Where's my husband gone?

[*Stepping round and looking before her.*]

Ah, here he is coming this very way, his eyes full of joy and wonder.

[*Enter Vasudeva.*]

Vasudeva. [*Reflecting.*] Ah, what can this mean?

The sky reels and the earth trembles with the thundering of dark clouds pierced by lightning and fierce gusts of wind. Has Vishṇu descended secretly, the smiter of demon clans for the protection of the people? (9)

[*Looking up.*] Here is Devakī.

After woes innumerable she goes to save her seventh and avoid the loss that befell six sons. She is made eager by his many

[1] 'Moon-faced'.

[2] Mt. Mandara, used for churning the ocean.

[3] Her cousin (or brother) king of Mathurā who had her children killed because of a prophecy that he himself would be slain by a son of Devakī.

qualities revealed by signs at birth, and carries the death of Kaṃsa, calling it her son. (10)

Devakī. [*Approaching.*] Greeting, my lord.

Vasudeva. It is midnight, Devakī. Everybody in Mathurā is asleep. So, while no one is looking, I will take the boy away.

Devakī. Where will you take him?

Vasudeva. Well may you ask. I do not know. The wicked Kaṃsa rules over the whole earth with a single sway. So where should I take this child, long life to him? Nay, I will take the boy where destiny decides.

Devakī. My lord, I want a long look at him.

Vasudeva. Ah, mother, all too fond,

Wouldst thou gaze at this infant moon in the dragon's[1] maw? While thou hast thy long, long look, Kaṃsa will be the death of him. (11)

Devakī. That shall he never be.

Vasudeva. May all the gods say the same. Bring him here.

Devakī. Take him, my lord.

Vasudeva. Oh, how heavy the child is.

With eyes of lotus petal this child is weighty as the Vindhya and Mandara mountains. How wonderful the endurance of the woman that carried him in her womb. (12)

Devakī, go within.

Devakī. I am going, unhappy that I am. [*Exit.*]

Vasudeva. Poor Devakī,

Her heart is here, her body there. So is she cut in two, as the crescent moon is seen at once in the water and in the sky. (13)

Devakī has gone in. Come, I must hasten to the city gate.

Full of wrath at the slaughter of my first-born but fearful of the King, I must take the child, and race along the road, swifter than the swift, though my arms seem to lift a mountain. (14)

[*Stepping round.*] Here is the city gate. I'll slip through. [*Does so.*] Everybody in Mathurā is asleep. I'll be off. [*Stepping round.*] Now I'm away from Mathurā. How thick this darkness is. For now—

Darkness anoints my limbs, the sky, it seems, is raining lamp black; my sight is useless, like service rendered to a rascal.[2] (15)

How great the power of darkness.

[1] Rāhu the demon that swallows the moon and causes its eclipse.

[2] Stanza recurs in *Cārudatta in Poverty*, i. 19.

The quarters are invisible, the trees one solid mass. The familiar world is utterly transformed. (16)

I can go no farther. Hullo! the light of a lamp. Can the wicked Kaṃsa have learnt of my departure and have come with lights to seize me? If so, I shall teach him a lesson. [*Draws his sword, turns, and looks back.*] No, there is no one to be seen. Ah!

When my sight was overcome with darkness and I could not see my way, the child produced this brightness to assist our flight. (17)

This is the way. I must be off again. Hullo! this is the sacred Jamna that I've come to, swollen with the rains. Alas, all my efforts are in vain. What am I to do now? Good, I have it.

Though this stream is alive with snakes and crocodiles, and tumultuous with mighty waves, difficult to pass even in imagination, timidity is useless, and I must win through and swiftly swim across, if fate allows. (18)

[*Proceeds to do so. In amazement.*] Why, the water is cut in two; on this side it stands still, on the other runs away. The holy river makes a way for me. I must hurry on. [*Goes down into the river.*] Now I have crossed the Jamna. Hist! that sounds like voices.[1] I am unlucky. Obviously I must be close to a herdsmen's station. Yes, my old friend Nandagopa lives in a station near here. Once I flogged him at Kaṃsa's orders and put him in fetters. I will go in. Nay, but the herdsmen will be suspicious, if they see me coming here by night. So I'll pass the night under this banyan tree and wait for dawn. O spirit of this banyan tree, if this child has been born in the Vṛishṇi clan to slay Kaṃsa for the good of all the world, let some one come from the cattle station. No, no, let my old friend Nandagopa come.

[*Enter Nandagopa carrying a girl-baby.*]

Nandagopa. [*Sorrowfully.*] Little lass, little lass, wilt go away and leave us with never a taste of the luck of the house? And now how dark it is, with hundreds of buffaloes all in a heap.

The night's so dark with the welkin all obscured and the moonlight hidden by the dirty weather, 'tis like a shepherdess arrayed in black and fallen asleep in her clothes. (19)

This midnight my wife Yaśodā had a daughter, but the poor child died as soon as she was born. To-morrow our station is to hold a festival in Indra's honour. So lest the herdsmen should be downcast by this trouble, I took this little girl in my arms and came out alone, with my feet encumbered by my chains. Poor Yaśodā fainted away not even know-

[1] *huṃkāra*, grunting, &c.

ing whether the baby was a boy or a girl. Oh, little lass, poor little lass!

Vasudeva. Now, who is this lamenting in the night? This poor fellow must be a companion in misfortune.

Nandagopa. Wilt go away and leave us with no taste of the luck of the house?

Vasudeva. I recognize him by his voice. It must be my old friend Nandagopa. I'll call him. Nandagopa, my friend, come here.

Nandagopa. [*Alarmed.*] Now who the deuce is this calling me by name? 'Nandagopa, Nandagopa'; I've heard the voice before. Is it a demon or a goblin sprite?[1] Such a frightful night and the little girl in my arms, what am I to do?

Vasudeva. My dear Nandagopa, don't be alarmed. Come here.

Nandagopa. [*Listening attentively.*] Bless me, by the voice I think it's Master Vasudeva. I will go up to him. Nay, what have I to do with him? He listened to the word of Kaṃsa the king, and had me thrashed, he did, and put fetters on my feet. I'll not go near him. Nay now, out on this hard heart o' mine. He's done me a thousand kindnesses, he has, sorrowed in my sorrow, was glad when I was glad, besides I mind 'twas by the king's order he put me into jail. I'll go up to him. But here's the lass. What'll I do? Ay, good! that's the thing.

[*Approaches and looks round in surprise.*]

Why, it's getting light! Here's Master Vasudeva with a child in his arms. [*Coming up.*] How d'ye do, master, how d'ye do?

Vasudeva. Ah, good Nandagopa, and how are the royal kine?

Nandagopa. Ay, master, they're all right.

Vasudeva. And all your people?

Nandagopa. 'People', say you? Ay, they're fine.

Vasudeva. Come, good fellow. What are you hiding?

Nandagopa. Nay, master, naught at all.

Vasudeva. By my life I charge you, tell the truth.

Nandagopa. No help for 't. Well listen, master. This midnight my wife, nay, nay, I mean your honour's humble servant Yaśodā, had a daughter, but the poor child died as soon as she was born. To-morrow our station is to hold a festival in Indra's honour. So lest the herdsmen should be downcast by this trouble, I took this little girl in my arms and came out alone with my feet encumbered by chains. Poor Yaśodā fainted away not even knowing whether the babe was a boy or a girl.

Vasudeva. Alas, good fellow, one cannot cozen Death that commands the world. Come, friend, the corpse is stiff and stark,[2] abandon it.

[1] A Rākshasa or a Piśāca.

[2] *Lit.* 'become wooden'.

Nandagopa. Nay, master, I can't do that.

Vasudeva. Such is the way of the world. Abandon it.

Nandagopa. As you order, master. Oh, little lass, little lass! [*Weeps.*]

Vasudeva. Do not grieve too much, my friend. Now rise, I say.

Nandagopa. [*Rises and comes near.*] Greeting, master, what orders for your humble servant?

Vasudeva. You know, good fellow, that the wicked Kaṃsa has had my six sons done to death.

Nandagopa. Yes, master, I know.

Vasudeva. Well, this is the seventh, long life to him. I have no luck with my sons. Do you take him, that he may live by your luck.

Nandagopa. I'm scared, master, wholly scared. If Kaṃsa should hear of it, a son of yours in my hands, why it 'll be all up with my head.

Vasudeva. [*Aside.*] My scheme miscarries. Remorseless men know what to say. That 's how I must speak. [*Aloud.*] My dear Nandagopa,

If ever I have done thee any kindness, the time has come for
thee to make some return thereof. (20)

Nandagopa. Some return, you say. Then I care nought for Kaṃsa or his father Ugrasena. Bring along the boy.

Vasudeva. Good fellow, take him.

Nandagopa. Nay, master. I am polluted by carrying the dead lassie. Wait a moment, master, while I purify myself in a pool of the Jamna.

Vasudeva. My good fellow, you're pure by nature from living in a cattle station.

Nandagopa. Then I'll purify myself with dust as the herdsmen do.

Vasudeva. No harm in that. Do so if you will.

Nandagopa. As my master orders. [*Does so. In surprise.*] Wonderful, master, wonderful. As I was picking up some dust, a stream of water two yards wide broke out of the ground.

Vasudeva. 'Tis the power of the child. Well, wash yourself.

Nandagopa. All right, master. [*Does so and returns.*] Master, here I am.

Vasudeva. Take him.

Nandagopa. Master, my arms are too weak to carry a child as heavy as a mountain.

Vasudeva. Come, old fellow, I know your strength and courage.

Nandagopa. Strength and courage? I'll tell you, master—when a bull 's tearing mad I can catch him by the horns and make him leave go. I can lift out a goods cart stuck in the mire. All the same I can't carry this child.

[*Enter the Five Weapons and Garuḍa.*]

Garuḍa. Garuḍa am I of beauteous wings and mighty speed. The chariot and pennon of the wielder of the Śārṅga bow. For of old in the battles of gods and demons it was I that carried Vishṇu with his force. (21)

Discus. I am Kṛishṇa's discus gleaming in his fingers. Dazzling is my lustre like the noon-day sun. At the three steps and the churning of the ocean I slew hordes of demons and evil sprites. (22)

Bow. I am the Bow. On my slender waist lies Vishṇu's hand. Female in form I boast the strength and courage of a man. For Vishṇu's sake in the van of battle have I smashed the serried lines of foes, destroying men and horses, elephants and cars. (23)

Club. I'm Hari's Club Kaumodakī. At his command I churned up Sarayū, slew the demons, and sported[1] in the torrents of their gore. (24)

Conch. The Conch I am, picked up by Vishṇu himself from the ocean. At the noise of me in battle these foes of the gods perish. (25)

Sword. I am Nandaka the sword. None can avoid me in battle. The moment mighty Vishṇu brings me to mind, out I come. (26)

Discus. We the discus, the bow, the club, the conch, and the sword, manglers of monsters, have come to serve the son of Vasudeva. (27)

So come. The holy Vishṇu has descended to the mortal world. We, too, will go down to the herdsmen's station disguised as cowherd boys to join the adventures of the Boy.

All the Weapons. So be it. [*They approach Vishṇu.*]

Vasudeva. My friend, pay homage to the child.

Nandagopa. Very well, master. O prince, my homage. Do thou make thyself much lighter, as easy to carry as hay. Otherwise how can a poor herdsman carry thee?[2]

Discus. Hail, divine Nārāyaṇa, Lord Vishṇu the Almighty.

The deeds of all immortals, good deeds and bad, will be forces in the world through thee. So do a favour to this man, O Banner of Yadu's House, by becoming light. (28)

Vasudeva. Take the child.

Nandagopa. As you order, master.

[1] Reading *prakrīḍitam* as suggested by the Editor.

[2] Adopting the Editor's ingenious emendation of a corrupt line.

Vasudeva. There is the dawn. Go back home, my friend.

Nandagopa. Wonderful! Oh master, a miracle! My fetters have fallen off.

Vasudeva. That's all through the prince's power. Go home.

Nandagopa. As you order, master.

Vasudeva. Nay, come here a moment.

Nandagopa. Here I am, master.

Vasudeva. I know thou art ever affectionate by nature, yet for this
child I demand thy love in the widest sense. At this time the
seed of the Yādavas, the last remnant of what is burnt, is
entrusted to thy keeping. (29)

How will you bring him up?

Nandagopa. Listen, master. He'll go to one hut and drink milk; in the second he'll drink curd. Then he'll go to another hut and swallow fresh butter; in another he'll eat rice pudding; in yet another he'll spy a jar of buttermilk. In short, he'll be the lord of our station.

Vasudeva. Very good. Now go.

Nandagopa. As you order, master. [*Exit.*]

Vasudeva. Well, Nandagopa is gone. I, too, must go back to Mathurā. [*Stepping around.*] It sounds as if some one were crying. Can Nandagopa have returned through fear of Kaṃsa? [*Stepping around.*] Why this little girl has come to life again. I'll take her and put her in Devakī's arms, so shall I deceive the wicked Kaṃsa. [*Takes up the girl.*] Oh, how heavy she is. This, too, is another wonder caused by the prince. I must away. Hullo, here is the Jamna, the same as it was before. I must get along. Now I've passed the Jamna. Here is the city gate. Everybody in Mathurā is still asleep. I'll go in. [*Enters.*] Here's the house of wicked Kaṃsa, looking like the abode of Ill-luck. And here is my own house, like the home of Fortune. I'll go inside and comfort Devakī.

May the gods be kind to us. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

[*Enter some young Cāṇḍāla* [1] *women.*]

All. Come, master, come along. Make a marriage with our girls.

[*Enter the King.*]

King. Ha! What is this?

[1] Outcastes.

The palace pinnacles are fallen. The earth is rocking like a ferry boat, cleaving a line of mighty billows. Such omens are of moment with the consequence of great qualities and deeds. Do they mean my fortune in the future—or calamity? (1)

All. Come, master, come along. Make a marriage with our girls.

King. No watchmen are on duty here, no maids with torches, and so my house is all invaded by these fearsome outcaste wenches, as dusky as blue lotus or collyrium. (2)

All. Come, master, come along. Make a marriage with our girls.

King. Oh, how impudent are these outcaste sluts?[1]

All my enemies perish before my wrath. Sun, moon, and fire, are in my control. I am death to the god of death, inspiring terror in the heart of fear, yet even me they harass with their insolence. (3)

All. Come, master, come along.

King. Despicable creatures. Why, they have suddenly disappeared! I'll go within.

[*Enter Curse.*]

Curse. Ho, there, where are you going? This house belongs to me.

King. Who is this appearing suddenly from inside? He's black as a mass of collyrium with a firebrand in his hand. His face is dreadful with projecting teeth, his eyes are yellow like a snake's. He has come to the earth, like wrath incarnate, from the mouth of Śiva. (4)

Who are you?

Curse. Don't you know me? I am the seer Madhuka's Curse, named Arms of Thunderbolts.

From the cremating ground I come, ugly and fierce, in a pariah's dress, adorned by a fine chaplet of skulls. I am here to enter the heart of King Kaṃsa. (5)

King. You seek the impossible.

The mountain Meru with its lovely golden bowers, its summits and its caves is not shaken by the wind of a crow's wings flapping. How ludicrous you are, desiring to drink up the ocean with its lines of tumultuous waves and all its monsters in your hollowed hands. (6)

Curse. In good time you will know. [*Vanishes.*]

King. Ho, vanished all of a sudden! I'll go to bed and rest my weary eyes. [*Sleeps.*]

Curse. [*Reappearing.*] Ah, he is asleep.—Poverty, Bald-head, Mid-

[1] Reading *dhṛṣṭāḥ* for *sṛṣṭāḥ*.

night, Deep-sleep, and Yellow-eye. Come here. Let us all go in.

All. Be it so.

[*Enter Fortune.*]

Fortune. You must not enter.

Curse. Who are you, lady?

Fortune. Don't you know me? I am his good fortune.

Curse. So? The king's fortune are you? Then you may leave at once. This house now belongs to me.

Fortune. Oh, indeed!

Thou fool, dost thou forget this house as rich as Laṅkā belongs to me? Who gave thee the right to come in here by night and drive me away? No need of many words. Thou canst not enter, or even gaze upon this house still possessed by me. (7)

Curse. Sweet Goddess, resting on the lotus, please leave this Kaṃsa's body. Such is Vishṇu's command.

Fortune. Vishṇu's command? Alas!

I have dwelt with the king so long, I am unable to desert him. This powerful chief, ever grasping his bow,[1] fills me with sore remorse. (8)

Still, the command of Vishṇu must not be disobeyed. So I must go to Vishṇu. [*Exit.*]

Curse. The king's fortune has gone. Now, indeed, this abode is ours. Come in Ill-luck, Baldhead, Midnight, Deep-sleep, and Yellow-eye; let us play the game that befits our breed.

All. From to-day be thou devoid of virtue and good deeds.

Curse. I clasp thee close ever on the path of wrong. The sage's curse am I, and now, I have thee fast. Ere long shalt thou come to destruction. (9)

[*Disappears.*]

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Greeting, my lord.

King. Ha!

Portress. It's Yaśodharā, my lord.

King. Yaśodharā, didn't you see those outcaste women come in?

Portress. Outcaste women? Why, even the people who wait daily on my lord's lotus feet, find it hard to enter, let alone outcaste women.

King. Have I been dreaming then? Go, Yaśodharā and call the chamberlain, Bālāki.

Portress. As my lord commands. [*Exit.*]

[1] *Guṇa-saṅgrāhe*, H. Weller takes as 'with his fist on the bowstring'. Sarup takes it as 'collection of qualities'.

[*Enter the Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Greeting to your Majesty!

King. My good Bālāki, put this question to the household priest and the astrologer. What portend to-night's storm of wind, earthquake, and shower of meteors, that are clearly signs of destiny? [1]

Chamberlain. Your Majesty, the priest and the astrologer declare—

King. Yes? What?

Chamberlain. Hearken—

The Eternal One, that dwells above the sky, has descended to the mortal world with some mysterious purpose. This tumult with the rolling of heaven's drums, and the earthquakes proclaim his birth. (10)

King. At whose birth has this earth with its mighty hills been shaken? Find out whose son it is, and the purpose of this incarnation. (11)

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and returns.*] Greeting, your Majesty! (The Princess Devakī has been delivered of a daughter.[2]

King. Is this true?)

Chamberlain. I have never told your Majesty a lie. She was seen in the nurse's arms with all your servants round.

King. Well, a brahman's word I hold as true, though it be false. Go summon Vasudeva.

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

King. Vasudeva is virtuous and truthful. He will not tell me a lie. Good, we shall hear the truth.

[*Enter Vasudeva.*]

Vasudeva. Six of my sons have perished. Yet summoned by the cruel king, I drag this body wasted by sorrow to his presence like a helpless slave. (12)

Alas, such is the way of the world.

Whether one heeds the danger [3] or heeds it not, both ways, one must go to the king, from fear or from want of fear. (13)

[*Approaches the king.*] Oh, son of Śaurasenī, I am here.

King. Son of Yādavī, sit down.

Vasudeva. Very well. [*Sits down.*] Tell me, son of Śaurasenī, why have you summoned me?

[1] Reading doubtful. Weller, 'mysterious spirits appear'. Before the Chamberlain's statement one would expect him to 'Exit and re-enter' as the Editor points out.

[2] Following the Editor's suggested connexion of the text where there is clearly a lacuna.

[3] Sarup takes *bhayam* as nominative. 'Source of fear'. 'A king is a terror—heed him or heed him not'.

King. Devakī, I understand, has been delivered of a child.

Vasudeva. Why, yes, she has.

King. A boy or a girl.

Vasudeva. [*Aside.*] Shall even I have to tell a falsehood? Nay, to save the prince, I regard even a falsehood as truth. What am I to do? Good, I have it.

[*Aloud.*] She was delivered of a daughter.

King. Be it girl or prince I must have it slain in any case. With human effort I am sure to cozen fate. **(14)**

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Greeting, my lord! The princess says, it is only a daughter, a little girl, let your majesty be merciful.

Vasudeva. O, son of Śaurasenī, grant Devakī's prayer. Women love their daughters more dearly than their sons.

King. Do you remember the compact?

The compact made with me, when thou didst hear the curse of the Seer Madhuka, that thou would'st give me all the babes born of Devakī? **(15)**

Vasudeva. Ay, the compact; I have nothing to say.

Portress. My lord, what am I to tell the princess?

King. Yaśodharā, you may tell the princess, it is not seemly now to make this appeal. I will show her some other greater kindness.

Portress. As my lord commands.

King. Yaśodharā, it should be done like this. [*Whispers.*]

Portress. May your lordship be content.

Vasudeva. My wishes have been pure, and shall I now bring another's child to death? Shall I not rather go and fetch the prince? Nay,

This maid was dead before and came to life again. That boy's power will save her from slaughter. **(16)**

Now I must go and comfort Devakī. [*Exit.*]

King. Yaśodharā, go and fetch that girl.

Portress. As my lord commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter a nurse with a girl-baby in her arms and guards.*]

All. Gently, lady, gently. Here is the middle door. Enter.

Nurse. Greeting, my lord. Here is the girl. I've looked after her all the time.

King. Ah, the child has a royal look. Must even I put a girl to death?

Nurse. Forbear, my lord, forbear.

King. Here is Kaṃsa's stone. I must summon all my courage.

This is the seventh child born by the power of the sage's curse. When that has perished I shall be at peace. (17)

[*Seizes the child and dashes it on the stone.*]

Oh, one part has fallen on the ground, another risen to the sky. It's mounted up with hands agleam with weapons to destroy me. (18)

And now, oh, woe is me,

This dreadful form reveals herself, grasping a keen-edged lance, and looms up like the night of death at the destruction of the world. (19)

[*Enter Kārtyāyanī* [1] *with her retinue.*]

Kārtyāyanī. The demons Sumbha and Nisumbha and the Buffalo I slew, smiting the ranks of the celestials' foes. Now am I Kārtyāyanī born in Vasudeva's house [2] to destroy the Kaṃsa brood. (20)

Pot-belly. Pot-belly [3] am I, invincible, of fierce deeds in battle. Dreadful in my mighty hissing issued at the Goddess's wish. Swiftly I glide from the sky to the wide earth, eager to slaughter the haughty demons vainglorious of their powers. (21)

Spear. I am the Spear, a spirit brought down to this earth and given a beautiful gleaming form by the favour of the Goddess. Kaṃsa will I strike down and drag him hither and thither on the battle-field as the God of War dragged Tāraka rooted in the ocean.[4] (22)

Nīla. And I am Nīla,[5] stirrer up of strife, a hero of the battle, who never turns his back. I shall slay the wicked Kaṃsa as the great Spear-wielder [6] split the Krauñca rock. (23)

Speed of Thought. I am Speed of Thought, swift as the wind. Hither I come to fulfil the Goddess's purpose. I do away with demons in the forefront of the fight just as fire goes through a house of reeds. (24)

Kārtyāyani. Pot-belly, Pointed-ears, Big Blue, and Speed of Thought, come here. We'll disguise ourselves as cowherds and go down to the herdsmens' station to observe the Blessed Vishṇu's exploits as a child.

All. As the Goddess bids. [*Exit Kārtyāyanī with her train.*]

King. Ah, here comes the dawn,

[1] The terrific goddess Dūrgā.

[2] But the girl was born in the herdsman's family.

[3] Kuṇḍodara a serpent.

[4] *Pādapaṃ jalanidher*, 'tree of the ocean'.

[5] Dark-blue.

[6] Skanda the God of War.

To find peace, I'll go straightway to the house of peaceful rites and make a great offering of expiation. So peace shall come to me. **(25)**

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

INTERLUDE

[*Enter the Old Herdsman.*]

Old Herdsman. Ho, Meghadatta, and you there, Bull, and Pott, and Herder[1] drive along the cattle. Let 'em drink their fill and come along lowing in the woods of Brindaban.[2] That bull there, straying from the herd,[3] has been rootling in the anthills. With the black snakes sticking to his horns he looks as if he was dressed up with strings of blue lotus. And here's another bull with its tail in the air and its fore-legs bent tossing up the earth with its sharp horns. He's white all over like the moon. I'll just call Dāmaka. Dāmaka, hullo there! Take the blessed cattle and their calves to dry ground and then come here.

[*Enter Dāmaka.*]

Dāmaka. Ha, Master Nandagopa's got a powerful crop of grass. Since the day that son of his was born everything has gone wonderfully well. So let the cattle graze on here and I'll step across to uncle. [*Approaches.*] Hullo, uncle, good day to you!

Old Herdsman. Peace be on us and on the cattle.

Dāmaka. Uncle, ever since Nandagopa's son was born, our cattle has been free from sickness. All the herdsmen are very happy, and besides, anywhere you dig there's roots, and on every bush there's fruits. And however much you milk, the milk still comes in streams.[4]

Old Herdsman. And I'll tell you another wonder. When Nandagopa's son was but ten days old, a witch named Pūtanā took the form of Nandagopa's wife and came to the house with her dugs full of poison. Then she took up the boy and put her breast to his mouth. But he knew her for what she was and threw her down. Then she went back to her witch's form and straightway died. Then, when the boy was no more than a month old a goblin called Śakaṭa came in the form of

[1] Vṛishabha-datta, Kumbhadatta, and Ghoshadatta.

[2] Reading *vundāvaṇe.*

[3] Reading doubtful.

[4] Reading doubtful.

a cart. But the boy knew him and with one kick knocked him to pieces. And he turned back into a goblin and died. Then just over a month old he was, when he ran into one house to drink milk, into another to eat curd, in another swallowed the butter, in another devoured rice pudding—and in yet another went for the pot of butter-milk. The angry dairy-maids told Nandagopa's wife. And she was furious and took a cord and tied it round his middle and fastened him up to a large mortar. And what did he do? Why he pulled up the mortar and cast it at two demons he caught sight of, Yamala and Arjuna disguised as trees. And the two of them were squashed into one, for he went in between them dragging the mortar and felled them root and branch, and they turned into demons and expired. Then the herdsmen said—his strength and courage were so great—from that day on, he should be called Master Dāmodara.

And the boy had hardly learnt to run about, when a demon called Pralamba came disguised as Nandagopa. He threw Saṅkarshaṇa across his shoulder, but as he went Master Saṅkarshaṇa knew him and gave that demon a blow on the head with his fist. The blow brought the demon's eyes out, so he too turned back into a demon and gave up the ghost.

Then with cowherds round him he went to the palm wood to gather fruit. And the demon Dhenuka came there disguised as a donkey. But Master Dāmodara saw through him and seizing his left foot threw him to the ground and upset the fruit. And he too changed back into a demon and died. Then there was another demon called Keśī that came in the form of a horse. Master Dāmodara spotted him and put some camphor in his mouth. Then he split him in two, and there was another demon dead.

That 's what Master Dāmodara has done and more besides.

Dāmaka. Ay, uncle; but let all that be. To-day he 's coming here to lead a round dance with the girls.

Old Herdsman. Then we must go with all the herdsmen to see Master Dāmodara's dancing in a ring.

Dāmaka. As you say, uncle.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Old Herdsman.*]

Ere the sun has fully risen bow the head in homage to the kine, the mothers of the world, ever full of nectar. (1)

How prosperous our hamlets are. Now we'll go and call the girls proud as punch and dressed up with tabors. Ho there, Belle of the station, Wood Garland, Crescent, and Gazelle,[1] come along and come along quickly.

[*Enter all the girls.*]

Girls. Good day to you, uncle.

Old Herdsman. Lassies, here's Master Dāmodara with Master Saṅkarshaṇa as white as milk. Here he comes with all the lads around him looking like a lion in a cave.[2]

[*Enter Dāmodara accompanied by cowherds and Saṅkarshaṇa.*]

Dāmodara. [*In surprise.*] Ah, these cowherd girls are naturally charming, but how delightful when dressed up.

Their faces are like full-blown lilies and their eyes like lotuses. Fair as golden champak flowers, in garments of varied hues, they romp around sweetly prattling, with their hands and tresses laden with woodland blossom. (2)

Saṅkarshaṇa. Here come all the young herdsmen.

Here are some stand shouting in delight with coloured drums, and there are others with eyes and cheeks of lotus petal playing divers games. Others have been awake with glee in the hamlet at Brindaban echoing with the lowing of the kine, and are singing as merrily as ever. (3)

Old Herdsman. Yes, master, they're all along.

Dāmaka. Greeting, master.

Saṅkarshaṇa. Have all the lads come in, Dāmaka?

Dāmaka. Yes, master, they're all along.

Dāmodara. Come now, Belle of the station, Wood Garland, Crescent, and Gazelle, we must do this round dance made for herdsmen folk.

Girls. As you tell us, master.

Saṅkarshaṇa. Dāmaka and Meghanāda, let them beat the drums.

Both. Right, master.

Old Herdsman. Master, you're all to foot it in the dance—what am I to do?

Dāmodara. Why, you are the spectator.

Old Herdsman. Very well, master.

[*All dance.*]

Old Herdsman. Bravo, that's good.[3] Well sung. Well danced. I'll dance a bit myself. Now I'm tired out.

[1] Ghoshasundarī, Vanamālā, Candralekhā, and Mṛigākshī.

[2] *guhānikshipta.*

[3] Reading *idaṃ.*

[*Enter Herdsman.*]

Herdsman. Oh, master, master, get away from here.

Dāmodara. Why are you so excited, Dāmaka?

Herdsman. Here 's that demon Dreadnought Bull [1] made of destruction in a lump—tearing up the ground with his sharp hoofs, and his bellowing sounds like thunder. That 's why I 'm scared.

Dāmodara. So Dreadnought Bull has come. [*To Saṅkarshaṇa.*] Well, sir, take these lads and lasses to the hill top and watch me fight this wicked creature. I 'll cure his pride for him.

[*Exit Saṅkarshaṇa with the others.*]

Dāmodara. Here comes the wicked Dreadnought.

> His hoofs are cleaving the surface of the earth, his horns tear away the banks. While terror-stricken herdsmen only gaze at him, he rushes bellowing along. (4)

[*Enter Dreadnought Bull.*]

Dreadnought. Ho, here am I.

> To slay mine enemy I have taken the form of a bull, slitting the sky, as it were, with a million rays from the points of my horns.[2] I shall feel happy to-day, when I have easily overcome my vainglorious foe in the wood of Brindaban. (5)
>
> At the sound of my bellow the women in this hamlet miscarry. The earth with its forests of trees trembles, stamped with crescents by the blows of my hoofs. (6)

Now where is Nandagopa's son? Ho there, son of Nandagopa, where are you?

Dāmodara. Vilest of bulls, this way. I am here.

Dreadnought. [*Looking at him.*] Oho,

> There must be mettle in this boy, for at the sight of me the mighty one, of terrible form and terrific roar, he is neither daunted nor amazed. (7)

Dāmodara. What 's that, sirrah? I hear of fear only to-day from thee, I am born on the earth to grant safety to those that are alarmed. (8)

Dreadnought. Pooh! You are only a boy. That 's why you know no fear.

[1] Arishṭavṛishabha—a bull unscathed or immune from injury.

[2] Taking *koṭi* in the sense of a *crore.* Otherwise *śṛṅgāgrakoṭi*—could be '*points* at the end of my horns'. *ālikhan* either 'painting' or 'scratching'. If *kiraṇa* could be taken in the sense of 'particle of dust' we could translate 'flecking the sky with dust from the points of my horns' which is somewhat less extravagant, and in keeping with the action of the bull's horns in the previous verse. But this is not the most natural meaning of the words.

Dāmodara. Vilest of bulls, will you taunt me, that I am a boy? If a man is bitten by a black snake does he not perish though the snake be young? So of old the infant Skanda destroyed the Krauñca mountain. **(9)**

Dreadnought. That may be.

Dāmodara. And hearken again to this, thou fool. Is not a rock of the hardest stone compact cast down by a thunderbolt as slender as a twig? **(10)**

Dreadnought. Ho, son of Nandagopa, what do you mean to do?

Dāmodara. To destroy you.

Dreadnought. Do you think you can?

Dāmodara. No doubt of it.

Dreadnought. Then take the weapon suited to your breed.

Dāmodara. 'Weapon' say you, sirrah?

I have these two arms of mine with shoulders hard as mountain boulders. Weaklings like thee may need some other weapon. And if thou doest not fall quickly on the ground clubbed to death by these same arms, my name is not Dāmodara. **(11)**

Dreadnought. Come then, begin the fight.

Dāmodara. Vile bull, I'll stand upon one leg. Knock me over, if you can.

Dreadnought. No doubt of that. [*Tries to do so, but falls down senseless.*]

Dāmodara. Take heart now, bull. Is this the strength you boasted of?

Dreadnought. [*Recovering. Aside.*]

Ha, this boy is not easy to subdue.

He may be Rudra, Indra or Vishṇu himself. Nay, my guess is near the mark, he must be the Almighty. **(12)**

Ah, wherever we are born, there is the Supporter of the Triple World, incarnate as Madhusūdana for the destruction of demons. **(13)**

So be it then. If I am slain by Vishṇu I shall go to heaven. So I shall fight. [*Aloud.*] O Son of Nandagopa, now am I as proud as ever.

Dāmodara. Ho ho, stay now.

Why dost thou bellow, lord of bulls, pressed in my arms, like a monsoon cloud swollen before it falls?[1] Come now, I will cast thee on the earth like the cliff of Mount Añjana smitten by the thunderbolt. **(14)**

[1] So Jacobi (quoted by Weller) *pāta-pravṛddhaḥ* meaning *pātāyapravṛddhaḥ*. Reading *vāta-pravṛddha* 'swollen by the wind' Sarup.

[*Does so.*] There lies the wicked Dreadnought Bull.

Eyes, mouth, and nose are bathed in streams of flowing blood, the hair of his hump stands erect. With twitching feet and ears this bull, the lord of demons, falls lifeless to the ground, like a mountain with its topmost pinnacles cleft by a thunderbolt. (15)

[*Enter Dāmaka.*]

Dāmaka. Greeting, Master. Saṅkarshaṇa has just heard of a great serpent called Kāliya coming up in a pool of the Jamna, and has gone there from the hill. Stop him, master, stop him.

Dāmodara. I have heard of Kāliya, a haughty serpent king. Very well, I 'll break his pride.

He battens on the people, cows and brahmans. From to-day he will lose his power and lie in peace. (16)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

[*Enter Dāmodara.*]

Dāmodara. These cowherd maidens follow me, frightened at the sight of the serpent king, confused and incoherent in their terror. How lovely they are! They have the eyes of young *cakoras* drunk with joy, their delicate breasts are swelling into prominence. Charming, with quivering lower lips, in their excitement they let the wreath fall from their locks and their upper robes slip down. (1)

[*Enter the Cowherd Girls.*]

Girls. Oh, master, don't! Don't go into that pool! It 's the home of a great and wicked serpent.

Dāmodara. Do not be anxious, maidens. Look you,

All the birds and troops of beasts avoid this ocean pool, the herds of elephants regard its depths with fear and trembling; but I will enter it and agitate its oily water. Though timid cowherd maidens would restrain me with charmingly tender words of warning, I shall drag forth the mighty serpent Kāliya so fond of his Jamna home. (2)

Girls. Master Saṅkarshaṇa, don't let him go.

[*Enter Saṅkarshaṇa.*]

Saṅkarshaṇa. No need for terror or anxiety. You girls show your devotion, but look you,

The circle of the quarters is ruddy with the baneful burning poison flames, that issue from that furious dragon's maw. Yet one glance at Kṛishṇa's impetuous onset alarms him, and he lowers his head among his coils. (3)

Girls. But Dāmodara hasn't turned a hair.

Dāmodara. For the good of all people I shall straightway subdue this dragon.

[*Enters the pool.*]

Girls. Oh, see the clouds of smoke.

Dāmodara. How deep this pool is. And now,

This Jamna, seething with poison fire within, gray with the dragon's smoky breath, will I make ripple as with liquid sapphires and the sheen of dark blue silk [1] in folds. (4)

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter the Old Herdsman.*]

Old Herdsman. Oh, master, has he gone into the Jamna pool, though the lasses tried to stop him? Hi there! don't be rash in going in. There 's tigers and boars and elephants that drunk water at that there pool and dropped down dead. What? I can't see him. What 'll I do? I 'll climb this pot *palāśa* tree [2] and get a view. Ho, there 's smoke rising.

Saṅkarshaṇa. Look, my dears,

Dāmodara has seized the dragon, stirring up the water from the bottom. Standing on the hood of the dark blue serpent he looks like Indra riding a storm cloud. (5)

Old Herdsman. Ha, ha! bravo, master, bravo!

[*Enter Dāmodara dragging the serpent.*]

Dāmodara. Here you are.

To make a mock of Kāliya, quivering with rage, I set one foot upon his head, and, waving my arms like pennons, lightly dance the lovely herdsman's reel [3] on the great snake's hood distended with venom. (6)

Girls. Wonderful, master, wonderful! He 's doing the reel as he steps on Kāliya's five hoods.

Dāmodara. Now I, too, will pluck some flowers.

Kāliya. Ah,

The world's expanse is girt by the mountain chain 'twixt light

[1] *dukūla.* See note *The Embassy*, I. 3.

[2] *kumbha-palāśa. Palāśa = Butea frondosa.*

[3] *Hallīśaka.*

and dark,[1] the mountain Mandara in the ocean[2] was squeezed by the Serpent,[3] Śiva's bowstring. So now in a moment will I roll thee up in my coils, for I'm as hard as the massive trunk of the Destroyer's[4] elephant, and dispatch thee to the gods' abode. (7)

Old Herdsman. Oh, master, master, here's Dāmodara with his two feet like flowers kicking along the great snake, like an incarnation of a Jamna pool, while he's picking flowers. [*Coming down.*] Bravo, master, bravo. Pick away, pick away. I'll come and help. Nay, I'm scared, master. I'll just go and tell Nandagopa all about it. [*Exit.*]

Dāmodara. From within this Jamna pool, with its fish and crocodiles destroyed, I'll drag perforce the dirty venomous snake. He's breathing hard with his round hood expanded in the height of swelling insolence, but I'll cast him on the ground. (8)

Kāliya. Here am I,

By whose wrath the human body is set on fire and the earth consumed. I'll burn thee up with lines of flames; let the worlds and hosts of Maruts protect thee. (9)

Dāmodara. Kāliya, if you can, burn this single arm of mine.

Kāliya. Ha, ha,

I could burn the entire earth, with its seven mighty mountains, bounded by the four oceans. Why not burn thy arm? (10)

Come, wait a moment. Herewith I reduce you to ashes. [*Emits venomous flames.*]

Dāmodara. Ho, have you shown your strength?

Kāliya. Have mercy, blessed Nārāyaṇa.

Dāmodara. Is this the strength you boasted of?

Kāliya. Mercy, Lord,

Thine arm of matchless might as powerful as Mount Mandara lifted up the hill Govardhana.[5] What strength have I, Lord of the Gods and Triple World, to burn that heroic arm, on which all the world depends. (11)

[1] Sarup thinks there is only one simile intended by *yathā*, *yadvacca*, identifying 'the world's expanse' with Mandara and *Lokālokamahīdhara* with the serpent bowstring. *Lokālokamahīdhara*, he translates, 'supporter of the visible and the invisible world'. It seems more natural to take *mahīdhara* as 'mountain' and the whole as 'the mythical mountainous belt (light on the one side and dark on the other) which separates the visible world from the world of darkness' (Macdonell, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*).

[2] 'Receptacle of sea-monsters.'

[3] Śesha.

[4] Indra.

[5] Kṛishṇa held it up for seven days to protect the cattle.

Blessed One, I erred in ignorance. With all my household I seek thy protection.

Dāmodara. Kāliya, why did you enter this Jamna pool?

Kāliya. Because I was afraid of Garuḍa your exalted mount. That is what I seek by your blessed favour—safety from Garuḍa.

Dāmodara. It shall be so.

When he sees my footprint on thy head, great serpent, Garuḍa
himself will grant thee that security. (12)

Kāliya. I thank you.

Dāmodara. You may go home.

Kāliya. As the blessed Nārāyaṇa commands.

Dāmodara. Nay, come here a moment.

Kāliya. Here I am, Blessed One.

Dāmodara. From to-day on you must leave my folk alone, cows, brahmans, and all.

Kāliya. Blessed One, this water is poisoned with my venom. I will take out the poison and leave this pool.

Dāmodara. Go your ways.

Kāliya. As the Blessed Nārāyaṇa commands.

[*Exit with his household.*]

Dāmodara. Now I will offer the girls these flowers gathered in the pool.

Girls. Here comes our master to delight our hearts, and not a scratch upon him. Greeting, master.

Saṅkarshaṇa. Well done. That 's a service done to cows and brahmans.

Dāmodara. Take these flowers.

Girls. Our folk have never plucked these flowers before. They have not been touched by the rays of the sun or moon or damaged in the slightest. We're afraid of them, master.

Dāmodara. The poor things are frightened by what they have not seen before. Don't be afraid, don't be afraid. The touch of my hand has made them lucky. So take them.

Girls. As our master bids.

[*Enter a Servant.*]

Servant. Ho, cowherd. Where is the son of Nandagopa?

Cowherd. There he is with the cowherd girls all round him. He has just subdued the great serpent Kāliya.

Servant. [*Approaching.*] Son of Nandagopa, King Kaṃsa, son of the Great King, fitly called Ugrasena, orders you—

Dāmodara. What? Orders me?

Servant. To come with your brother and all your people, to attend a

and dark,[1] the mountain Mandara in the ocean[2] was squeezed by the Serpent,[3] Śiva's bowstring. So now in a moment will I roll thee up in my coils, for I 'm as hard as the massive trunk of the Destroyer's[4] elephant, and dispatch thee to the gods' abode. (7)

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Servant. [*Approaching.*] Son of Nandagopa, King Kaṃsa, son of the Great King, fitly called Ugrasena, orders you—

Dāmodara. What? Orders me?

Servant. To come with your brother and all your people, to attend a

great festival called the Consecration of the Bow that is to take place at Mathurā.

Dāmodara. Noble brother, now is the time for the secret purpose of the gods.

Saṅkarshaṇa. Let us go quickly.

Dāmodara. Yes, that's the thing.

To-day will I drag out Kaṃsa—his locks dishevelled, his jewelled crown knocked off, necklace broken, bracelets fallen, and sacred thread dangling loose—ruthlessly I'll slay him as a lion slays an elephant that has long insulted him. (13)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

[*Enter the King.*]

King. They tell me that Dāmodara in the herdsmen's station with his brother[1] is exhibiting great prowess and heroic valour. I will bring him here, with the pretext of the Bow, and have him smashed by a wrestler in the ring. (1)

Dhruvasena!

[*Enter a Servant.*]

Servant. Victory to your Majesty.

King. Dhruvasena, has Nandagopa's son arrived?

Servant. Deign to listen, Majesty. No sooner had he entered the city, with Saṅkarshaṇa and the herdsmen, than he robbed the washermen of their clothes. When the Chief Minister heard of it he had the mad elephant 'Lotus Crusher' driven against him to trample on him. But,

When the boy, amid the troop of cowherds gathered round him, suddenly saw the lordly elephant bearing down upon him like a mountain, violently he tore out its tusks and slew it straight away. (2)

King. 'Slew it', you say? Go and bring further news.

Servant. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and returns.*] Victory to your Majesty! Now I hear this son of Nandagopa's got into the High Street, with flags and banners flying to celebrate the festival, decorated with hanging wreaths and garlands thick with fumes of aloe-wood and incense. Well, when he came to the palace gate he saw the hump-

[1] Bala, i. e. Balarāma or Saṅkarshaṇa.

backed girl Madanikā carrying a casket of scented unguents. So he took the unguents out of her hands and anointed his own limbs. Then he rubbed her hump with his hand and made her straight. Then he snatched some flowers from the garland maker and put them on. And now he is going towards the archery hall.

King. What does he mean to do? Go, quickly, and find out more?

Servant. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and returns.*] Victory, Majesty, Siṃhala, the guardian of the archery hall, tried to stop him, but he hit him under the ear and killed him. Then he took the bow and broke it in two. And at present he is making his way towards the audience hall.

Here he comes, black as a line of rain clouds, in yellow robes, brightly adorned with garlands and peacocks' feathers. Here he comes with Balarāma, his great eyes rolling with rage, like an incarnation of Death. (3)

King. My heart it seems is fluttering. Go, bring in those wrestlers as directed, Cāṇūra and Boxer, and bid the Yādava youths prepare.

Servant. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

King. Now I will go up to the balcony to see Cāṇūra and Boxer fight. [*Goes up.*] Madhurikā, unbolt the door.

Portress. As my master bids.

[*King enters above and sits down.*]

[*Enter Cāṇūra and Boxer.*]

Cāṇūra. Here am I ready for the fray, as full of pride as an elephant in rut. To-day I smash the boy Dāmodara in the middle of the ring. (4)

Boxer. My name is Boxer, and my fist is made of iron. To-day in fury will I throw down Balarāma, as a thunderbolt throws down the summit of a lofty mountain. (5)

Servant. There is the king. Pay your respects.

Both Wrestlers. [*Approaching.*] Victory, my lord!

King. Cāṇūra and Boxer, you two must do your utmost, so as to repay me.

Wrestlers. Ay, be sure, my lord. We 'll succeed with various tricks of fighting, with the half-moon grip[1] and binding blows. You'll see, my lord.

King. Good, do you so. Dhruvasena, bring in the cowherd boys.

Servant. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Dāmodara and Saṅkarshaṇa with Dhruvasena.*]

[1] Accepting Weller's emendation *aḍḍhindu-karasandhāna.*

Dāmodara. Noble brother.

My birth in the mortal world is of no avail, nor can I find any satisfaction in my deeds at the cattle-station or in the town to-day, till in combat I have vanquished this wretched Kaṃsa, a devil in a former birth, and drag him round the ring. (6)

Saṅkarshaṇa. Entering the ring to-day, that angry Boxer, with his iron fist, with my fist will I slay, rushing like a raging gale that smites a cloud hanging in the sky. (7)

Servant. The Great King is here. Approach.

Both. Great King? Of what?

Servant. Of all the world, and us.

Dāmodara. Not after to-day.

Servant. Victory, Majesty! Here is that pair!

King. [*Looking at them.*] So this is Dāmodara. Ah—

Dark in hue, arms and shoulders strong, his breast is broad and muscular; splendidly made, he stalks along with the firm grace of a tusker blind with rut. No wonder he has done these deeds I've heard of, for he is fit to overturn the universe. (8)

And this other, looking so artless but inscrutable, is, I hear, Balarāma his elder brother.

His great eyes are white as new-blown lotuses. His body gleams like the moon in lovely dark-blue raiment. His long arms are rounded like silver bars. He is brightly garlanded with quivering petals of blue water-lilies. (9)

Dāmodara. Brother, I think these two are ready to fight with us.

Saṅkarshaṇa. Very likely.

King. Dhruvasena, let the fight begin.

Servant. As your Majesty commands. [*Throws down a garland.*]

Wrestlers. Fi-fo-fum, beat the battle drum.

Cāṇūra. Come now, Dāmodara, try your luck with my two arms.

Dāmodara. Here I come. Stand thou, and resist my charge.

Boxer. Yah, you Balarāma, to-day you'll lose your life, drowned in a pool of blood, running from all your limbs smashed up by my fists.

Saṅkarshaṇa. To-day, thou Boxer, I'll send thee off to hell.

[*Both pairs start wrestling.*]

Dāmodara. [*Laying out Cāṇūra.*] This one 's dead with broken ribs.

Saṅkarshaṇa. So is mine.

Dāmodara. Now I'll send that devil Kaṃsa down to hell. (10)

[*Mounts the balcony, seizes Kaṃsa by the head, and throws him down.*]

There lies the wicked Kaṃsa,

His visage thick with gore, with goggling eyes, with broken neck and thighs, with shattered shoulders, loins, and legs, with fractured hands and knees, with necklace broken, bracelets fallen, and sacred thread dangling loose.[1] He has fallen like a mountain whose peak is crushed by a thunderbolt. (11)

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Alas, alas, the king!

[*Another voice behind the scene.*]

Warriors of the Yādava race,[2] now is the time to repay our master's salt. Come quickly, come.

Dāmodara. Brother, do you hold off the army.

Saṅkarshaṇa. See how I keep it back.

This army, with its dreadful roar of warriors whirling round with swift steeds, elephants, and chariots, flashing with bright swords, javelins, spears, lances, and pikes—this army will I throw into confusion with my two arms, like an ocean with lines of billows in a lattice of foam driven by the fury of the gale. (12)

[*Enter Vasudeva.*]

Vasudeva. Citizens of Mathurā, no violence, I pray you.

This is my eldest son, born of Rohiṇī, and do you not know this son of Devakī? A truce to this excitement. What 's to do with weapons? Vishṇu himself has come down to us to slay Kaṃsa. (13)

Saṅkarshaṇa. [*Looking across.*] Oh, there 's father. Father, I salute you.

Dāmodara. Father, my salutations, too.

Vasudeva. May you both be invincible in victory. As the father of goodly sons I gain to-day the noblest fruit.

Both. We thank you.

Vasudeva. Who 's without there?

[*Enter Servant.*]

Servant. Greeting, your honour.

Vasudeva. Throw out these corpses.

Servant. As your honour orders.

All the Herdsmen. Hurrah! The kingdom now belongs to herdsmen.

Vasudeva. Ho, without there.

Servant. Your honour.

Vasudeva. Go quickly and give this order to Anāvṛishṭi in Dāmodara's

[1] Identical with iv. 13*b*.

[2] Text enumerates 'Anāvṛishṭi, Śivaka, Hṛidika, Pṛithuka, Somadatta, Akrūra, &c.'

name. Release the Great King Ugrasena from his fetters, renew his consecration, and bring him here.

Servant. As your honour orders. [*Exit.*]

Vasudeva. Ah,

The celestial instruments are sounding, it is raining flowers.
All the gods have come to honour the destroyer of Kaṃsa. (14)

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

The best of deities guard Mathurā, this city with its rows of mansions adorned with gold, with its spacious palaces and markets, its gates and towers—ever may he guard it, glorious with large lotus eyes, lord and leader of the gods, the conqueror of the triple world. (15)

Vasudeva. Citizens of Mathurā, hearken to my words. By favour of Vasudeva here, the son of Vasudeva, who looks down with scorn on all earthly champions, who is skilled in bursting the bolts of the lord of demon's city, Ugrasena has recovered his kingdom, and his rule is now proclaimed.

All. The Yādava kingdom is now confirmed.

Vasudeva. Bring in his Majesty.

Servant. As your honour orders. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Ugrasena.*]

Ugrasena. Kṛishṇa[1] has removed my misery endured in long incarceration, as by his might Vishṇu aided Indra. (16)

By your kindness I am rescued from a flood of troubles.

[*Enter Nārada.*]

Nārada. Now that Kaṃsa is destroyed, I have come down from heaven at the gods' command with nymphs and celestial musicians to worship Vishṇu. (17)

Dāmodara. Ah, here is the divine sage, Nārada. Welcome, sage. Here is water for thy feet and all hospitality.

Nārada. I accept it all. The nymphs and celestial musicians are singing.
Obeisance be to thee, Nārāyaṇa. Deities bow low before thee.
By the slaughter of this demon the earth is well protected. (18)

Dāmodara. Divine sage, I am well pleased. What further favour can I show you?

Nārada. If Vishṇu is pleased with me my efforts are well repaid.
I shall now return to heaven with all the greatest gods. (19)

Dāmodara. You may go. We shall meet again.

Nārada. As the blessed Nārāyaṇa commands. [*Exit.*]

[1] Keśisūdana—'Slayer of the maned demon'.

Epilogue.

This earth that extends to the ocean with the Himālaya and Vindhya mountains as ear-drops, may our Lion-King rule over her, marked with the symbol of a single sovereign sway.[1] **(20)**

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

FINIS.

[1] Identical with the Epilogue of *The Vision of Vāsavadattā* and of *The Embassy.*

THE CONSECRATION

(*Abhisheka-nāṭakam*)

INTRODUCTION

THE Consecration is another Rāmāyaṇa play, but distinctly different in character and quality from *The Statue Play.*

The latter play begins with the breaking off of Rāma's consecration by his father and ends with his consecration on his return to Ayodhyā after fourteen years of exile.

The present play ends at the same point, but begins with another consecration, that of the monkey prince Sugrīva, when his elder brother Vālin is slain by Rāma.

We have a picture of Sītā in captivity, an account of the exploits of Hanumān in Laṅkā, and a representation of the arrogance and downfall of the Demon king, Rāvaṇa.

In the First Act Rāma promises Sugrīva that he will kill his brother Vālin. Sugrīva was formerly a king of the monkeys, but Vālin had taken possession of his kingdom and his wife. On arriving at Kishkindhā, the capital of Vālin's kingdom, Sugrīva fights with Vālin. Vālin knocks his brother down. Hanumān reminds Rāma of his promise. Without a word of warning Rāma shoots Vālin with an arrow. Vālin complains that this act is unworthy of a hero. He is told, in an unconvincing argument, that this is punishment for taking his younger brother's wife. Vālin is satisfied, asks forgiveness, and expires. Lakshmaṇa is told to arrange for Sugrīva's consecration. (ACT I.)

The Interlude at the beginning of the next Act tells us that Sītā has been lost and the monkey prince Aṅgada has gone south to look for her.

Hanumān comes to Laṅkā and searches all the town for Sītā. From a roof he spies her, just as Rāvaṇa appears, and listens to the Demon king's efforts to win the affections of the scornful captive. Rāvaṇa goes to take his bath and the monkey introduces himself to Sītā. She hesitates whether to believe him. He goes off to ruin Rāvaṇa's park. (ACT II.)

Rāvaṇa gets news of the damage done by Hanumān, who is eventually brought before him as a prisoner. Hanumān defies the Demon king and delivers Rāma's message. Rāvaṇa is furious but

Vibhīshaṇa restrains him from killing an envoy. Vibhīshaṇa urges Rāvaṇa to restore the stolen bride, but the king banishes him for sympathizing with the enemy. (ACT III.)

In the Fourth Act Rāma's host reaches the sea, and is joined by the banished Vibhīshaṇa. The Ocean enters and provides a passage. Two spies are caught, but sent home with a message to the Demon king. (ACT IV.)

In the Fifth Act Rāvaṇa renews his advances to Sītā, and shows her what appear to be the severed heads of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa. He hears of the death of his son, and then of the defeat of his army. He wishes to kill Sītā, but is dissuaded, and goes out in his chariot to fight Rāma. (ACT V.)

In the Interlude at the beginning of the last act, three fairies describe the battle in the favourite manner of our dramatist.

Rāma refuses to see Sītā, and assents to her wish to burn herself. The God of Fire will not hurt her, but leads her back to her husband. Rāma then receives her, saying that he was aware of her purity, but 'acted thus to bring conviction to the world'. We hear the singing of celestial musicians and the shouts of the people at Rāma's consecration. Rāma re-enters newly anointed as king, and the play ends in mutual congratulation. (ACT VI.)

This play is not equal to *The Statue Play*.[1] There is nothing in it comparable to the scene in the Statue Gallery, nor is there the same delicacy in portraying the characters of Rāma and Sītā. Rāma is simply the ruthless warrior, or should we say, relentless divine force? For he is definitely identified with Vishṇu. His refusal to receive Sītā, until she is declared to be Lakshmī, reads very differently from the passage in the Seventh Act of *The Statue Play*:

Female Ascetic. Why, here is your husband. Go up to him. I cannot bear to see you alone.

Sītā. Ah! Even to-day it seems too good to be true. [*Going up to Rāma.*] Greeting, my lord.

Rāma. Maithilī, do you remember we used to dwell in Janasthāna? Do you recognize these trees, your fosterlings?

Sītā. Yes, yes, I see. But then every leaf was visible and now one must look up at them.

Rāma. Quite so. Time produces ups and downs. Do you recollect, Maithilī, that under this tree a herd of deer was startled on seeing Bharata dressed in white?

Sītā. Yes, my lord, I remember very well.

[1] Dr. Sarup regards it as an early work of Bhāsa.

Rāma. And here is that great tortoise that witnessed our austerities. We were sitting here, thinking of the oblations to be made for my beloved father, when we saw the golden deer.

Sītā. Oh, my lord, don't speak of it, pray don't.

[*Trembles with fear.*]

Rāma. Calm your fears. That time is past. Vol. i, p. 198.

The most *human* figures in this play are Rāvaṇa, the Demon king, and Vālin, the Monkey chief. A familiar feature in many of these plays is the interest in, one might almost say the sympathy with, kings and warriors on the brink of ruin, whether this be due to a curse or to their own wickedness. Rāvaṇa breaks down at the news of his son's death. He is not all devil incapable of emotion. He is an arrogant powerful king, deceitful in his courting of the captured lady, but not utterly brutal. It is only at the end, when all his realm is falling to pieces and his son is killed, that for a moment he is on the point of slaying the fatal beauty that has brought him to destruction. As the bad news keeps pouring in, he feels the oppression of a curse that seems to be closing in upon him.

The other characters are more conventional and of less interest.

The most striking divergence from the Epic story lies in the manner of crossing the ocean. Instead of the famous bridge built by the monkeys hurling rocks into the sea, we have the miracle of divided waters, as when Vasudeva crossed the Jamna in *The Adventures of the Boy Krishṇa.*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager. } in Prologue.
Assistant. }
RĀMA.
Sugrīva, a monkey prince.
Hanumān.
Lakshmaṇa.
Vālin, elder brother of Sugrīva.
Tārā, his wife.
Aṅgada, a monkey prince.
Kakubha, a monkey officer.
Hollow-face (Bila-mukha), a monkey soldier.
SĪTĀ.
RĀVAṆA.
Spike-ear (Śaṅkukarṇa), a demon attendant of Rāvaṇa.
Portress (Vijayā), of Rāvaṇa's palace.
Vibhīshaṇa, younger brother of Rāvaṇa.
Monkey Chamberlain.
Monkey General.
Ocean.
Indigo (Nīla), a monkey officer.
Parrot and Mate (Śuka and Sāraṇa), two of Rāvaṇa's ministers disguised as monkeys.
Demon Chamberlain.
Demon Porter.
Lightning-tongue, a demon.
Three Fairies.
Agni, the God of Fire.

Other monkeys and demons.

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening enter the Stage-manager.*]

Stage-manager. May Rāma protect you—he that slew the obstructors of Viśvāmitra's[1] sacrifice, vanquishing in battle the valour of Virādha,[2] he that killed Kabandha and the Monkey King, swelling with overweening pride, and smote the house of the demon chief. (1)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you... [*Stopping and looking around.*] But what is that? I thought I heard a noise just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Sugrīva, this way.

[*Enter Assistant.*]

Assistant. Master,

Whence has arisen this mighty noise that pierces our ears? It is like the roar of thundering clouds of dreadful speed raised on high by furious winds. (2)

Manager. Don't you understand, my lad? Rāma, the light of the Raghu house, and a delight to the eyes of all the world is tormented by the rape of Sītā. Sugrīva, with the great bull-neck, king of all the bears and apes, has been deprived of his wife's caresses. So these two are mutually pledged to help each other. Now preparations are being made to slay Vālin of the golden garland, the overlord of all the monkeys. So these two,

Rāma and Lakshmaṇa have arrived to reinstate Sugrīva, who was deprived of his kingdom, as Hari and Hara came to Indra's aid. (3)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE PROLOGUE.

ACT I

[*Enter Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Sugrīva, and Hanumān.*]

Rāma. Sugrīva, this way,

To-day, in a trice I will throw your enemy on the ground, his body cut down and chopped into mincemeat by my arrows.

[1] 'Son of Gādhi.'

[2] Virādha, Khara, and Dūshaṇa.

Abandon fear, O king, and close to me thou shalt see Vālin slain in battle. (4)

Sugrīva. By your favour, sire, I can hope for the kingdom of the gods, let alone the kingdom of monkeys. For,

Thine arrow, sire, will fly to-day, I cannot doubt, to cleave the heart of Vālin, for in the great forest it split seven *sāl* trees like Himālayan peaks and with its impetus clave the earth, O glorious warrior, passed to the serpents' home, sank in the ocean, and has now come back again. (5)

Hanumān. The words that have fallen from thy lips, O king, have removed our fear. So we grieve no more. Best of Raghus come to the mountain like a rainy cloud to vouchsafe victory to the Tawny One.[1] (6)

Lakshmaṇa. Noble brother, we must be nearing Kishkindhā: there is more moisture in the forest.[2]

Sugrīva. The prince is right.

Well-protected by thine arm, O king, we have reached Kishkindhā protected well by the great monkey's arm. Wait here, O best of men, while I roar a challenge, shaking the mountains and stupefying mortals. (7)

Rāma. Very well, do so.

Sugrīva. As my lord commands. [*Stepping round.*] Ho, there—

Chieftain, thou didst leave Sugrīva in the lurch through no fault of his, and now he comes eager to wait on thee in battle. (8)

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

What, what? Is it Sugrīva?

[*Enter Vālin with Tārā clinging to his robe.*]

Vālin. What, what? Is it Sugrīva?

Let go my garment, Tārā. Why are thine eyes and cheeks so wet with tears—lady of faultless limbs? To-day shalt thou see Sugrīva struck down in the battlefield with every limb bathed in blood. (9)

Tārā. Oh, please your Majesty, Sugrīva will not come without good reason. So take counsel with your ministers before you go.

Vālin. Ah, Moonface, my foe may resort to Indra, or to Śiva, if he will, with the sharpened axe. Not even Vishṇu with eyes of full-blown lotus can face me and prevail. (10)

[1] Hari, 'the Monkey'.

[2] Compare a similar line in *The Statue Play*, iii. 2.

Tārā. Oh, please, your Majesty. Do, please, do this favour to poor little me.

Vālin. Hearken to my prowess.

Aforetime, Tārā, at the churning of the nectar, I went and laughed at the legions of gods, demons, and ogres. And they were all astounded when they saw me dragging that lengthy[1] lord of serpents with his glaring eyes. (11)

Tārā. Oh, please, your Majesty.

Vālin. Come now, be obedient and go within.

Tārā. I am going, unhappy that I am. [*Exit.*]

Vālin. Well, Tārā has gone in. Now I'll break Sugrīva's neck. [*Rushing forward.*] Stay, Sugrīva, stay,

Though Indra should protect thee or Lord Vishṇu, once thou comest to-day within my sight thou shalt not return alive. (12)

This way, this way.

Sugrīva. As your Majesty commands.

[*The two fight with their fists.*]

Rāma. Look at Vālin,

Biting his lips with protruding teeth, eyes red with rage, he clenches tight his fists. Roaring dreadfully, the ape shines in the fight, like the fire of dissolution on the point of blazing forth. (13)

Lakshmaṇa. And look, noble brother, at Sugrīva,

With eyes as red as a full-blown lotus, his stout arms bound by golden bracelets, he makes for the monkey chief. But being an ape, he neglects the tradition of good men and attacks his elder brother. (14)

Vālin has knocked Sugrīva down.

Hanumān. Alas. [*Anxiously approaching Rāma.*] Greeting, sire. This is a bad business,

The monkey chief is strong, my master weak. Pray see the state of things and bear in mind your pledge. (15)

Rāma. Do not be anxious, Hanumān. The thing is done. [*Lets fly an arrow.*] Ha, Vālin falls.

Lakshmaṇa. There lies Vālin.

With blood-stained limbs and red eyes bleeding, with long arms stiff, he soon will see the world of the dead. He falls,

[1] Sarup takes *udagra* in the sense 'with hood raised up'. This is quite appropriate of a cobra.

but bravely drags his body, pierced by a goodly dart, and with its strength ebbing away. (16)

Vālin. [*Faints, recovers consciousness, and reads the name on the arrow.*[1] *To Rāma.*]

Oh, Rāma, was it worthy of a hero past all doubt about his duty, upholding the right conduct of kings, to cheat me unfairly in battle? Was it worthy of thee that art come to remove treachery from the world? (17)

Out on it,

Thou art kindly in seeming and a vessel of glory. But attacking me with treachery thou hast done an inglorious deed. (18)

Ho, Rāghava, you wear bark garments, but your heart contradicts your dress. To slay me by stealth while I was engaged in fighting my brother was an unholy deed.

Rāma. What, is slaying by stealth an unholy deed?

Vālin. No doubt of it.

Rāma. Nay, it is not so. Look you,

One may slaughter beasts by snares and guile. Thou art a beast and a guilty beast and so art thou punished by guile. (19)

Vālin. You think that I deserve punishment?

Rāma. No doubt of it.

Vālin. For what reason?

Rāma. Adultery.

Vālin. Adultery? But that is our custom.

Rāma. Nay, sirrah, that won't do.

As lord of the apes thou canst distinguish right and wrong. Thou didst show thyself a beast in possessing thy brother's wife. (20)

Vālin. In possessing a brother's wife our fault is equal. Only I am punished, not Sugrīva.

Rāma. Thou art punished because thou art guilty. The guiltless is not punished.

Vālin. Sugrīva embraced the lawful wife of me, his elder brother.

If I did the same by his, why am I guilty, Rāghava? (21)

Rāma. Why, because an elder brother should never touch a younger brother's wife.

Vālin. Alas, I have no answer. Being punished by you shall I be freed from sin?

Rāma. It shall be so.

Sugrīva. Alas,

[1] Compare *The Five Nights*, iii. 18.

O best of monkeys with the gait of a lordly elephant, my heart sinks within me when I see thy arms, like tuskers' trunks, lying on the ground, with bracelets broken by your enemy's shaft. (22)

Vālin. Do not grieve, Sugrīva. Such is the way of the world.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Oh, woe, the king.

Vālin. Sugrīva, keep away the womenfolk. They must not see me in this state.

Sugrīva. As your Majesty commands. See to it, Hanumān.

Hanumān. As the prince commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Aṅgada and Hanumān.*]

Hanumān. This way, Aṅgada.

Aṅgada. I am overwhelmed with grief to hear the monkey lord of troops of bears is in the hands of death, and come with tottering steps. (23)

Hanumān, where is the king?

Hanumān. Here lies the king,

His heart transfixed by an arrow, lying on the ground, he looks like Krauñca, best of mountains, assailed by Guha's[1] spear. (24)

Aṅgada. [*Approaching.*] Alas, great king!

Lord of the apes, thou usedst to sleep in comfort because of thy mighty power. Now thou rollest on the ground, and every limb has lost its movement. Obviously leaving this body pierced by a goodly dart, dost thou desire to go to-day to the heroes' heaven? (25)

[*Falls on the ground.*]

Vālin. Do not grieve, Aṅgada. Well, Sugrīva,

Thou art now the monkeys' ruler. Put completely out of mind the wrong I did thee. Put wrath aside, embrace the right, and protect this scion of our family. (26)

Sugrīva. As your Majesty commands.

Vālin. Rāma, whatever the offence, pray forgive these two their monkeys' tricks.

Rāma. Very well.

Vālin. Sugrīva, accept this golden necklace, the treasure of our house.

Sugrīva. I thank you. [*Accepts it.*]

Vālin. Hanumān, some water.

[1] Son of Śiva.

Hanumān. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Here is water.

Vālin. [*Sipping.*] Life seems to leave me. Here are the great rivers, Ganges and the rest. Urvaśī and those other nymphs have come for me. Death has sent this aerial car to fetch me, the wain of heroes, drawn by a thousand swans. So be it. Here I come.[1] [*Expires.*]

All. Woe, woe, the king.

Rāma. Alas, Vālin is dead. Sugrīva, perform the funeral rites.

Sugrīva. As my lord commands.

Rāma. Lakshmaṇa, arrange for Sugrīva's consecration.

Lakshmaṇa. As my noble brother bids.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Kakubha.*]

Kakubha. Our task is almost finished, so all the captains of the monkey troops are busy dining. Then I too shall do a bit of honour to the viands. [*Does so.*]

[*Enter Hollowface.*]

Hollowface. King Sugrīva has sent me out to go and bring news of Prince Aṅgada. He went off south to search for Sītā. But all the other monkeys sent out for this in every direction, as a return for noble Rāma's aid, have come back again. Now where in the world has the prince got to?

[*Stepping round and looking in front.*]

Here is Master Kakubha. I'll just ask him. [*Approaches.*] Howdido, sir.

Kakubha. Hullo, Hollowface. Where did you spring from?

Hollowface. Why sir, I've come by his Majesty's command to look for Prince Aṅgada.

Kakubha. Is the noble Rāma well? And the king?

Hollowface. Ay.

Kakubha. What is the king's intention?

Hollowface. He's sent me out to go and bring news of Prince Aṅgada. He went off south. . . .

[*And so on as before.*]

[1] Compare the death of Duryodhana in *The Broken Thighs.*

Kakubha. Don't you know that half the task is done?

Hollowface. What do you mean?

Kakubha. Listen.

Gaining tidings of Rāma's consort from the lord of birds, we mounted Mount Tremendous, with its tremendous elephants.[1] And, to-day, to reach Laṅkā quickly, the wind-god's son with his wondrous strength has leapt across the ocean. (1)

Come along then, let us wait upon the prince.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Sītā attended by several she-devils.*]

Sītā. Alack, I'm too enduring, wretched me. Parted from my noble lord, brought to the palace of the demon king, listening to disgusting, wicked, and reckless words, I go on living, wretched me. Still, I get a little consolation trusting in my lord's arrows. How is it that to-day I feel some comfort in my heart, like the water sprinkled when the ring of sacrificial fire is blazing? Can it be my lord is pleased with me?

[*Enter Hanumān with a ring on his finger.*]

Hanumān. [*Arriving in Laṅkā.*] How extensive is Rāvaṇa's palace.

Rich in gateways, gilt and variegated with squares decorated with coral and great gems, with quantities of white palaces, one above the other,[2] Laṅkā is as bright as the city of Mahendra in heaven. (2)

And yet forsooth,

Possessing this most excellent royal fortune, Ten-necks[3] is ready to destroy it by taking the wrong path. (3)

[*Going all round.*] I have traversed nearly all Laṅkā.

Several times have I passed through the ladies' quarters and private gardens,[4] through halls and palaces, through bathing tanks, pavilions, terraces, and mansions of the goblin king. Through taverns, temples, and dungeons, I have searched through every corner, but I have not seen the consort of the king. (4)

Alas, all my efforts are in vain. Well, I'll go up on the roof of this mansion and look round. [*Does so.*] Ah, here is a series of pleasure

[1] A jingle in the original, *agendraṃ sadvipendraṃ mahendraṃ.*

[2] *Vikṛta?*

[3] Rāvaṇa, the demon king of Laṅkā.

[4] *riniṣkuṭeṣu?*

grounds. I will go in and have a look round. [*Goes in and looks about.*] Oh, what a fine park!

With its beauty spots in rows of great trees adorned with coral and sapphires set in gold, with its beautiful mound, it is as lovely as the pleasure ground of the lord of gods in heaven. (5)

Moreover,

I have seen rocks with beautiful waterfalls and golden ore, I have seen ponds full of every kind of waterfowl, and orchards with trees laden with flower and fruit. All that I've seen, but not a sign of Sītā in the house of Rāvaṇa. (6)

Now, who is that I see, something like her, over there. I will go and see. [*Does so.*] Ah, now who is this lady?

Slender in form she is attended by hideous she-devils. She shows up bright like a streak of lightning in the midst of dark-blue clouds. (7)

She wears a single braid of hair that resembles a black snake. Her waist can be spanned by the hand. Her heart is set on her beloved, her body thin with fasting, while her face is bathed in tears. She is like a garland of wild[1] lotuses tossed aside in the heat. (8)

Ha, what is the meaning of this glare of torches? Ah, there is Rāvaṇa.

His diadem is set with gems. With fine large dark red eyes, he stalks along with a lively grace, as sportive as an elephant in rut. The lord of demons in a bevy of young women looks like a lion disporting himself among gazelles. (9)

What shall I do now? Good, I have it. I will climb into this *aśoka* tree and hide in its hollow. In that way I shall learn the news for certain. [*Does so.*]

[*Enter Rāvaṇa with his train.*]

Rāvaṇa. I, Rāvaṇa, with my celestial weapons, put to flight the hosts of gods, devils, and demons; in the fight my broad breast was scarred, as if by thunderbolts, with the tusks of the angry elephant of heaven. Sītā, of the bewitching eyes, shows no discrimination if she likes me not, infatuated with the little warrior ascetic. Assuredly, 'tis fate that makes the obstacle. (10)

[*Looking up.*] There is the moon—

Shining like a silver mirror the moon rises, displaying his beauty in the sky, a beloved friend of lotus beds, but oppresses my heart with his netted beams. (11)

[1] Sarup would read *nava* for *vana*, Sītā being like a fresh garland withered in the sun.

[*Stepping around.*] Here is Sītā at the foot of a tree, absorbed in contemplation. Her face is thin from fasting. She seems to shrink into herself, and sits crouching with her bosom and waist concealed, surrounded by a group of demon women, like a digit of the moon hidden by an eclipse.

She scorns delights, and me, and all this mighty fortune. Devoted to a mortal, she is beyond my power. (12)

Hanumān. Ah, now I understand.

This is that king's daughter of Mithilā, Rāma's bride. She is troubled like a gazelle frightened at the sight of a lion. (13)

Rāvaṇa. [*Approaching.*] Sītā, renounce this terrible ascetic vow. Accept me, beauteous lady, with all thy heart.[1] Put away that mortal, lady, moribund and averse from the ways of love. (14)

Sītā. Little Rāvaṇa is absurd. He knows nothing of a curse's mystic power.

Hanumān. [*Angrily.*] How arrogant this Rāvaṇa is, knowing nought of Rāma's two arms, nought of the great bow or the arrow, he calls him moribund. (15)

I cannot restrain my anger. Well, I will carry out the noble Rāma's task. Either,

If I kill Rāvaṇa, the task will be fulfilled. Or else if the demon overwhelms me, a great attempt will come to nought. (16)

Rāvaṇa. Exquisite lady, of slender form and lovely eyes, unloose that braid like a garland of blue lotuses. Take me to thy heart with my ten necks adorned with all kinds of gems and precious stones. (17)

Sītā. Right will be wrong if this wretched demon remains alive.

Rāvaṇa. Well, queen?

Sītā. Be you accursed.

Rāvaṇa. Ah, the majesty of a chaste wife,

In battle I crushed the gods with Indra at their head as well as demons. But even I seem stupefied by Sītā's three syllables. (18)

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Victory to the King, Victory to the Lord of Laṅkā, Victory to his Majesty our Master. Four hours have passed.[2] The bathing time is passing. This way, Majesty, this way.

[*Exit Rāvaṇa with his retinue.*]

[1] *Lit.* 'with all your limbs'.

[2] See note, p. 70.

Hanumān. Ha, Rāvaṇa has gone and the demon women gone to sleep. Now 's the time to approach the queen.

[*Comes down from the hollow.*]

Greetings, lady of a living lord—

I am sent by King Rāma, his very self, whose heart is saddened by anxiety through love for thee. (19)

Sītā. [*Aside.*] Who can this be? It may be some wicked demon pretending to come from my lord and trying to deceive me by disguising himself as a monkey. Well, I shall keep silent.

Hanumān. Do you not believe me? Away with your suspicion. Hearken, lady,

I am the monkey, Hanumān, sent to search for thee, by the Monkey King in alliance with Rāma, the light of Ikshvāku's house. (20)

Sītā. [*Aside.*] Be he who he may, he has mentioned my husband's name; so I will speak with him. [*Aloud.*] What, sir, is the news of my noble lord?

Hanumān. Hearken, lady.

His face is pale and thin, drawn by fasting. His charm and grace have gone through brooding on thy perfections. His body grows weaker, his fortitude is gone; burnt by the Love God's arrows, his eyes are full of tears. (21)

Sītā. [*Aside.*] Alas, unhappy me, I feel ashamed to hear my lord is so stricken by grief. But I see the pain of separation has its fruits, if indeed this monkey speaks the truth. Hearing of my husband's sympathy and pain on account of my humble self, my heart is swinging between joy and sorrow. [*Aloud.*] How was it, sir, that my husband made an alliance with your people?

Hanumān. Lady, listen,

For thy sake he slew in battle Vālin, the monkey-warrior, Sugrīva's elder brother. Then, princess, he gave Sugrīva the monkey kingdom, and the king sent out his apes to every quarter to search for thee. I am one of them, and have found thee out to-day, O queen, by a vulture's guidance. (22)

Besides, as such . . .[1]

Sītā. How cruel are the gods to make my husband so sorrowful!

Hanumān. Do not grieve, lady. For Rāma,

Grasping his great bow and surrounded by a host of monkeys, will assail Laṅkā and overwhelm the ten-headed Rāvaṇa. (23)

Sītā. Am I dreaming? Is it true, sir? I am not sure.

[1] Apparently some hiatus.

Hanumān. [*Aside.*] Alas!

She loves her lord and at heart recognizes it must be he, yet in her grief she will not believe it like one born in another body. (**24**)

[*Aloud.*] Lady, now will I,

Bring hither thy lord, O princess, with his mighty bow upraised and arrows in his hand. Set aside thy doubts of me, when thou art at his side with all thy sorrow gone. (**25**)

Sītā. Oh, sir, tell him how I am, in such a way that he may not be seized with grief at hearing of my plight.

Hanumān. As your ladyship bids.

Sītā. Go, I wish you success.

Hanumān. I thank you. [*Stepping around.*] Now how shall I announce my arrival to Rāvaṇa? Good, I have it:

With blows of fists and feet I will pulverize this park, so full of flocks of cuckoos, delightful with its lotus beds and clumps of beautiful trees. With its three mounds like clouds—thus shall I rob the demon king of his pride in his estate. (**26**)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

[*Enter Spike-ear.*]

Spike-ear. Ho, there! who is on duty at the door of the Golden Gatehouse? [*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. 'Tis I, Vijayā. What's to do?

Spike-ear. Oh, Vijayā, take a message at once to his Majesty the Lord of Laṅkā—the *Aśoka* Park is nearly all destroyed. For,

The tidings must be told. That *Aśoka* Park, where even the chief queen, Mandodarī, so fond of ornaments, does not gather sprays from kindness, where the Malaya zephyrs are afraid to flutter or to finger the young coral trees, that park of Indra's foe is destroyed. (**1**)

Portress. You, sir, are always in attendance on the king, and I have never known you so put about? Why is it?

Spike-ear. My good woman, the matter is most urgent. Please take the message at once.

Portress. Very well, sir, I'll take it. [*Exit.*]

Spike-ear. [*Looking in front.*] Why, here is his Majesty, the Lord of Laṅkā, coming this way.

Like pure white lotus are his savage eyes. With bright golden torches before him he rushes swiftly in a fury, like the sun arising at the dissolution of an aeon. (2)

[*Enter Rāvaṇa as described.*]

Rāvaṇa. What, what? Strange words are these thou utterest. I am listening. Speak out at once. What fearless wight intent on death has dared this deed to-day? By rooting up this grove he has done me grievous injury. (3)

Spike-ear. [*Approaching.*] Greeting, Majesty. Some monkey slipped in unnoticed and has thoroughly uprooted the *Aśoka* Park.

Rāvaṇa. [*Contemptuously.*] A monkey, say you? Go at once and catch him and bring him here.

Spike-ear. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

Rāvaṇa. Well, well,

If the gods have done this hostile thing to me, that terrified the triple world in battle, those nectar-eaters soon shall have the fruit arising from their insolence. (4)

[*Enter Spike-ear.*]

Spike-ear. Greeting, Majesty. That monkey is very powerful. He has snapped *sāl* trees like lotus stalks, and smashed the wood hill with his fist. He has made a clean sweep of the creeper bowers with the flat of his hands. Simply with his roar he has made the guards of the pleasure ground unconscious. Sire, be pleased to order a force sufficient for his capture.

Rāvaṇa. Then order a body of a thousand slaves to capture the ape.

Spike-ear. As the king commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Greeting, Majesty,

He uses trees as weapons, and in a trice he has slain our large force of slaves with our own great trees. (5)

Rāvaṇa. What, slain them? Then bid Prince Aksha catch the ape.

Spike-ear. As the king commands. [*Exit.*]

Rāvaṇa. [*Reflecting.*]

The prince is well trained in arms, brave, and strong. He should catch this forest-dweller perforce or slay him. (6)

[*Enter Spike-ear.*]

Spike-ear. Sire, be pleased to order another force.

Rāvaṇa. What for?

Spike-ear. Deign to listen. Seeing the prince going out against the

monkey, five generals followed him without waiting for your Majesty's orders.

Rāvaṇa. Well, what then?

Spike-ear. When the monkey saw them rushing on him, he seemed rather scared and went off to the gate-house. Then lifting the golden bar he laid low all five generals.

Rāvaṇa. Go on.

Spike-ear. Then Prince Aksha,

> His eyes red with anger, the prince was driving his chariot with the swiftest steeds, letting fly with the greatest ease a network of arrows, like a mass of monsoon clouds. But the monkey shook off the arrows and suddenly jumped on the chariot, seized the prince by the throat, and, grinning with glee, killed him with his fist. (7)

Rāvaṇa. [*Angrily.*] What? Killed him?

> Stay thou here. I myself will go for this miserable monkey and in a moment burn him to ashes with the sparks of the fire of my wrath. (8)

Spike-ear. May it please your Majesty, when he heard of the death of Prince Aksha, Prince Indrajit, his heart consumed with anger, went out to attack the monkey.

Rāvaṇa. Then go, and get more news.

Spike-ear. As the king commands. [*Exit.*]

Rāvaṇa. The prince is well trained in arms.

> In battle heroes needs must be slain or gain the victory. Yet this creature of mean deeds somewhat [1] disturbs my mind. (9)

[*Enter Spike-ear.*]

Spike-ear. Victory to your Majesty. Victory to the Lord of Laṅkā. Victory to the Blessed One.

> A tumultuous battle ensued betwixt the prince and the ape, who has now been quickly bound with snares. (10)

Rāvaṇa. What wonder if Indrajit (Indra's conqueror) has captured a monkey. Who is without there?

[*Enter Demon.*]

Demon. Greeting, Majesty.

Rāvaṇa. Go and summon Vibhīshaṇa.

Demon. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

Rāvaṇa. And do you bring the ape.

Spike-ear. As the king commands. [*Exit.*]

Rāvaṇa. [*Reflecting.*] Out on it,

[1] Reading *īṣan manojvaraḥ* with Editor.

God and demons in alliance dare not think of Laṅkā. Yet in defiance of Ten-Heads, the king, it has been entered by an ape. (11)

Moreover,

I conquered the three worlds in battle and proudly strode over Kailāsa with its deities and demons. Lord Śiva, with his train, together with his queen, I rudely shook and took a boon from him. But Pārvatī and Nandin, because I ignored them, laid a curse upon me. What if this should be that curse of mine, disguised in the form of an ape? (12)

[*Enter Vibhīshaṇa.*]

Vibhīshaṇa. [*Thoughtfully.*] Alas, how perverse the king has become. For,

Again and again I have asked him to restore the lady of Mithilā to her Lord. To the sorrow of his friends he will not listen to my words. (13)

[*Approaching.*] Greeting, Majesty.

Rāvaṇa. Come here, Vibhīshaṇa. Sit down.

Vibhīshaṇa. Very well, I'll sit down here. [*Sits down.*]

Rāvaṇa. Why are you looking so despondent, Vibhīshaṇa?

Vibhīshaṇa. The servants of an overweening master may well be despondent.

Rāvaṇa. Cut out that tale. You, too, go and fetch the monkey.

Vibhīshaṇa. As the king commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Hanumān held by demons.*]

Demons. Ha, this way.

Hanumān. I was not caught by an evil-minded devil. I made myself a prisoner to see the Demon king. (14)

[*Approaching.*] Ho, king, how are you?

Rāvaṇa. [*Disdainfully.*] Did he do all that, Vibhīshaṇa?

Vibhīshaṇa. Yes, sire, and even more.

Rāvaṇa. But how? Do you know?

Vibhīshaṇa. Deign to ask him, sire, who he is.

Rāvaṇa. Who are you, monkey? Why had you the impudence to enter our ladies' quarters?

Hanumān. Hearken.

I am the Wind-God's lawful son born in Añjanā. Hither sent by Rāghava. I am an ape and Hanumān 's my name. (15)

Vibhīshaṇa. Sir, did you hear?

Rāvaṇa. What if I did?

Vibhīshaṇa. Hanumān, what was the message of his honour, Rāghava?
Hanumān. Hearken to Rāma's orders.
Rāvaṇa. What, what? Rāma's orders, does he say? Have this monkey put to death.
Vibhīshaṇa. Pardon, your Majesty, but envoys should never be put to death, whatever their offence. First let us hear Rāma's message, afterwards you can do as you please.
Rāvaṇa. Well, monkey, what did that mortal say?
Hanumān. Hearken,

'Seek the best protection that thou canst, go to Śiva, or hide in the nethermost hell; with every limb cleft by my goodly arrows I will send thee to the abode of death.' (16)

Rāvaṇa. Ha, ha, ha,

With celestial weapons I defeated the legions of gods. All the demon chieftains bow to my will. Even Kubera is brought to nought with the loss of his aerial car. How can a mortal like Rāma pit himself against me? (17)

Hanumān. If you are as wonderful as all that, why did you steal his wife on the sly?
Vibhīshaṇa. Well said, Hanumān.

Thou didst lure Rāma away by magic, demon hero, and in the guise of a mendicant take her away by stealth. (18)

Rāvaṇa. Vibhīshaṇa, are you taking the side of my enemies?
Vibhīshaṇa. Pardon, king, my words are wise. Give back the wife of Rāghava. For I 'd fain not see this house destroyed through thee, O demon hero. (19)
Rāvaṇa. No need to be alarmed, Vibhīshaṇa.

Is a long-maned lion slain by a deer? Or a mighty elephant in rut struck down by a jackal? (20)

Hanumān. Do you think it proper, Rāvaṇa, for you whose fate is sealed to speak like that of Rāma? Speak not so, oh Rāvaṇa.

Thou worthless outcaste goblin, hopelessly evil,[1] is it right for thee to breathe such words of Rāma, the peerless paragon of heroes, Indra's equal, the one lord of the worlds? (21)

Rāvaṇa. What? He addresses me by name? Put this monkey to death. Nay, we should be blamed for killing an envoy. Spike-ear, set light to his tail and turn him loose.
Spike-ear. As the king commands. This way.
Rāvaṇa. Nay, come here a moment.

[1] *Lit.* 'whose merit is exhausted'.

Hanumān. Here I am.

Rāvaṇa. Take that mortal this message from me.

Rāma, I have humiliated thee by abducting thy wife. If thou hast any name for archery give me a great combat. (**22**)

Hanumān. You will soon see,

Thou shalt see thy Laṅkā with its great ramparts, gateways, and towers demolished, while all around the surrounding pleasure groves are rooted up by troops of apes, and thou art vanquished by the twang of Rāma's bow. (**23**)

Rāvaṇa. Ha, throw this monkey out.

Demons. This way, this way. [*Exit Hanumān with guards.*]

Vibhīshaṇa. May it please your Majesty, I have something I would wish to say all for your Majesty's good.

Rāvaṇa. Speak out; if it is good, we are ready to listen.

Vibhīshaṇa. I fear that utter destruction threatens the Demon race.

Rāvaṇa. But why?

Vibhīshaṇa. Because of your Majesty's indefensible idea.

Rāvaṇa. What do you mean?

Vibhīshaṇa. Why, the abduction of Sītā.

Rāvaṇa. What is wrong about that?

Vibhīshaṇa. It means a breach of the law and . . .

Rāvaṇa. And what? Your sentence is incomplete. Speak out.

Vibhīshaṇa. That is all.

Rāvaṇa. Vibhīshaṇa, what are you hiding? By my life, I'll curse you if you do not speak the truth.

Vibhīshaṇa. Pray promise not to punish me.

Rāvaṇa. I grant you that. Speak out.

Vibhīshaṇa. It means a breach of the law and a dangerous feud.

Rāvaṇa. [*Angrily.*] Dangerous feud? How so?

This base demon sides with my foe. Feeding fat mine ire he speaks harsh words to me without a tremor. (**24**)

Who is without there?

He disregards fraternal love and takes the side of my enemy. I cannot endure to see him before me, so let him be cast into banishment. (**25**)

Vibhīshaṇa. May it please your Majesty, I will go myself.

Forth I go, punished by thee, O king, but free from blame. Do thou abandon wrath and lust and do as thou shouldst do. (**26**)

[*Stepping round.*] And now,

This very day I'll betake myself to Rāma, of the lotus eyes and dreadful bow, who has made a vow to slaughter Rāvaṇa. That

god among men strives ever for his dependents' good. Thus shall I raise again the demon race from annihilation. (27)

[*Exit.*]

Rāvaṇa. Ha, Vibhīshaṇa has gone. I must take measures to protect the town.

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

INTERLUDE.

[*Enter a monkey Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Oh, general, order the monkey army to be in readiness.

[*Enter a General.*]

General. What, sir, is the reason of this preparation?

Chamberlain. The worthy Hanumān has brought news of Sītā the wife of the noble Rāma.

General. What news?

Chamberlain. I will tell you.

The princess bides in Laṅkā utterly cast down by grief. Besides, she's plagued by Rāvaṇa, who defies all moral usage. Our king, on hearing this, and wishing to help Rāma, whose heart is burning with intense grief, gave orders for the formidable monkey army to prepare. (1)

General. Very well. As his Majesty commands.

Chamberlain. I shall report to the king that the army is in readiness.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Sugrīva, and Hanumān.*]

Rāma. I have traversed the broad ridges and trackless thickets of mountains, huge as clouds. I have crossed rivers, where lions and tigers and lordly elephants slake their thirst; I have passed through a wonderful great forest, where the trees are rich with flowers and fruit; and now with the host of the monkey chief I have reached the shore of the sea. (2)

Lakshmaṇa. Here is the sacred ocean.[1]

[1] *bhagavān Varuṇaḥ.*

The ocean shines like sleeping Vishṇu, with the blue of sapphires and rainy clouds, with beautiful garlands of billows breaking into foam, and a thousand arms in the merging streams. (3)

Rāma. How now?

All ready to destroy my foe, with an arrow on my bow, the ocean now, to give him life, restrains my hand. (4)

Sugrīva. Lo, in the sky,

Whence comes this demon flying? Brilliant as a rain-cloud, with his limbs blazing with pure gold ornaments, he is like a moth about to rush into a fire. (5)

Hanumān. Ho, monkey warriors, be on your guard.

The monkey chiefs must now stand fast in battle for to slay the fiends with rocks and trees, with bound fists, with teeth and claws and knees, and with dreadful roars, and so protect our king. (6)

Rāma. A demon is it? Don't get excited, Hanumān.

Hanumān. As the prince commands.

[*Enter Vibhīshaṇa.*]

Vibhīshaṇa. Ah, I have come to Rāma's camping place. [*Reflecting.*] Now how will Rāma know who I am? I sent no messenger, and he does not know that I am coming, while I am related to his enemy. For,

My heart is anxious as to what the Lord of the Raghus will say to me. I come to him for shelter, but I am the younger brother of the enemy of the gods. Before him raging in the battle even the Thunder-wielder aided by all the gods was unable to make a stand. (7)

However, He is good, versed in the very essence of the law, kindly to dependents. How can I doubt Rāma, as my own heart is free of guile. (8)

[*Looking down.*] Here are the head-quarters of the hero of the Raghu house. I will descend. [*Descending.*] Ha, I shall stay here and send the prince word of my coming.

Hanumān. [*Looking upwards.*] Hullo. What, is it his Highness Vibhīshaṇa?

Vibhīshaṇa. Why, it is Hanumān. Hanumān, tell the prince that I have come.

Hanumān. Very well. [*Approaching.*] Greeting, prince.

Here is the righteous Vibhīshaṇa seeking thy protection, O king, being banished by his brother on account of thee. (9)

Rāma. What? Vibhīshaṇa seeking my protection? Dear Lakshmaṇa, go and bring him with all honour.

Lakshmaṇa. As my noble brother bids.

Rāma. Sugrīva, I see you wish to say something.

Sugrīva. Prince, these demons are very artful and fight by fraud. So one should think twice about admitting Vibhīshaṇa.

Hanumān. Nay, no need, your Majesty,

Vibhīshaṇa I deem as loyal to the prince as we are. I have seen him before in that city disputing with his brother. (10)

Rāma. If that is so, go bring him in with all honour.

Lakshmaṇa. As my noble brother bids. [*Stepping around.*] Ah, there is Vibhīshaṇa. Are you quite well, Vibhīshaṇa?

Vibhīshaṇa. Ah, the prince Lakshmaṇa. Prince, I am well indeed to-day.

Lakshmaṇa. Vibhīshaṇa, let us go to the prince.

Vibhīshaṇa. Certainly.

[*They both approach.*]

Lakshmaṇa. Greeting, noble brother.

Vibhīshaṇa. May it please your Highness, greeting.

Rāma. Ha, Vibhīshaṇa. Are you well, Vibhīshaṇa?

Vibhīshaṇa. Highness, I am well indeed to-day.

Come for protection to thee, the protector with eyes of lotus petals, I am well indeed to-day, O king, purified by the sight of thee. (11)

Rāma. From to-day be Lord of Laṅkā by my command.

Vibhīshaṇa. I thank you.

Rāma. Vibhīshaṇa, your very arrival means the accomplishment of our task. We have found no means of crossing the sea.

Vibhīshaṇa. Why, prince, what do you need for that? If the sea does not give a passage let fly your divine shaft upon him.

Rāma. Well said, Vibhīshaṇa. Good, that is what I will do. [*Suddenly standing up angrily.*]

If the sea vouchsafe me not this passage, swiftly will I still the roaring of his waves; my burning arrows will dry up both mud and brine; the shore will be strewn with fish dying by the score. (12)

[*Enter Ocean.*[1]]

Ocean. [*In confusion.*]

Against Nārāyaṇa, come here in human form to fulfil his purpose, I am guilty of offence. Fearful of his shaft, that destroys the forms of the celestials' foes, I fly at full speed to seek my lord's protection. (13)

[1] Varuṇa.

[*Looking round.*] Ah, here is the Blessed One. Wielder of discus, bow, and mace, he has taken on a human form. Himself the cause of all, he has come to fulfil some purpose. (14)

Salutations to the blessed Nārāyaṇa, the cause of the triple world.

Lakshmaṇa. [*Looking round.*] Why, who is this?

His diadem is set with gems. His body blue as fresh water-lilies, his beautiful great eyes are red like copper. Of rolling gait like an elephant in rut, he has risen from the midst of multitudinous waters. Swiftly his lustre seems to make the mortal world bow down before him. (15)

Vibhīshaṇa. Prince, here is the Ocean just arrived.

Rāma. Is this the Ocean? Holy sir, my salutation.

Ocean. The lord of the gods should not salute me.

Whence thy wrath, O prince? Wilt not forgo thine ire?
Command forthwith, O best of men, what should I do? (16)

Rāma. Pray grant a passage that we may go to Laṅkā.

Ocean. Lo, here is the passage. Pray proceed. [*Disappears.*]

Rāma. What, has the blessed Ocean disappeared? Look, Vibhīshaṇa, by his favour all the ocean's waves are motionless.

Vibhīshaṇa. Prince, the sea seems now to be cut in twain.[1]

Rāma. Where is Hanumān?

Hanumān. Here, your Highness.

Rāma. Hanumān, lead the way.

Hanumān. As the prince commands.

[*All step round.*]

Rāma. [*Looking round in surprise.*] Look, dear Lakshmaṇa, and you, my comrade Vibhīshaṇa. Your Majesty Sugrīva, look, and you, friend Hanumān. How varied is the ocean.

In one place spouting foam, in another the water is alive with fishes. In one place full of shells, in another like a dark blue cloud. Here are rows of billows, and there the peril of crocodiles. Here is a dreadful whirlpool, and there still water. (17)

By the favour of the Blessed One we have crossed the ocean.

Hanumān. Prince, this is Laṅkā.

Rāma. [*Gazing for a long time.*] Ah, the glory of the demon city will soon pass away.

Broken by the buffets of the blasts of my goodly arrows, it will sink, the very ends of it struck down by the waves of the

[1] This is very different from the well-known story of the monkeys building a bridge by dropping rocks in the sea. It reminds us of Vasudevas' passage across the Jamna. *Adventures of the Boy Kṛishṇa*, i. 18.

simian host, like a ship that 's lost in the ocean by the helmsman's fault. All through the fault of Rāvaṇa. (18)

Sugrīva, pitch the camp on this hill Suvela. [*Sits down.*]

Sugrīva. As the prince commands. See to it, Indigo.

Indigo. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Greeting, prince. While the armies were being encamped in proper order, and the numbers of the troops were being checked by the registers, two monkeys were caught that had come in from somewhere unnoticed. We don't know what to do with them. So your highness must decide.

Rāma. Bring them in at once.

Indigo. As your highness orders. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Indigo with Parrot and Mate, with folded hands, disguised as monkeys, and held by monkey guards.*]

Monkeys. Hi, speak, you two, speak!

Parrot and Mate. Master, we are servants of Master Kumuda.

Monkeys. Master, they make out they 're servants of Master Kumuda.

Vibhīshaṇa. [*Scrutinizing Parrot and Mate.*]

These two are not our soldiers, they are not even apes. Both are demons sent by Rāvaṇa: their names are Parrot and Mate. (19)

Parrot and Mate. [*Aside.*] Alas, the prince has recognized us. [*Aloud.*] Sir, we saw the demon race was doomed on account of the perversity of the demon king. So finding no place there we came here disguised as monkeys to seek refuge with your honour.

Rāma. What do you think, Vibhīshaṇa?

Vibhīshaṇa. Prince,

These twain are intimate ministers of the demon king; they will not abandon the Lord of Laṅkā even in mortal straits. (20)

So have them punished as they deserve.

Rāma. Nay, Vibhīshaṇa, say not so.

By chastising these my victory is not gained, nor is the demon king destroyed. So set them free. (21)

Lakshmaṇa. If you set them free, your highness might have it done after they have gone and examined all our camp.

Rāma. Lakshmaṇa has made a good suggestion. See to it, Indigo.

Indigo. As the prince commands.

Rāma. Nay, come here a moment.

Parrot and Mate. Here we are.

Rāma. Take this message from me to the demon king.

By abducting my bride thou broughtest this warfare on thyself. I have come as a guest of war eager to see thee, but see thee not. (22)

Parrot and Mate. As your highness orders. [*Exeunt.*]

Rāma. Vibhīshaṇa, we will now inspect the entire force.

Vibhīshaṇa. As your highness wishes.

Rāma. [*Stepping and looking around.*] Ah, the blessed sun has set. For now,

> The sun has gone home, contracting all his rays on the western mountain. His body tinged by the evening glow, he shines like a golden mark[1] on the forehead of an elephant covered with bright red cloth. (23)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

INTERLUDE.

[*Enter a demon Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Ho, there! who is on duty at the door of the Coral Gate-house?

[*Enter another Demon.*]

Demon. Sir, it is I. What am I to do?

Chamberlain. Go, summon Lightning-tongue by order of the king.

Demon. Very well, sir. [*Exit.*]

Chamberlain. Ah me, the prosperity of the Demon house is failing. All means of recovery are cut off. Heroic warriors are dead. The life of the king himself is in danger. But even now his mind has not returned to common sense. For who, indeed,

> Would not make peace by giving him back his wife on seeing him cross the sea?—the deep blue sea, full of monsters rising from the depths, its dreadful shore bounded by the rolling billows? (1)

Besides, The heroes have been slain by Rāma from Longhand down to Pot-Ear. Now to-day, Indrajit, has gone out too. (2)

In such a state of things,

> He disregards the minister's advice. Driven by desire, but thinking himself a mighty hero, for our misfortune he is keen to fight, and will not give back Janaka's daughter—the queen of the Rāghava bull. (3)

[*Enter Lightning-tongue.*]

Lightning-tongue. How are you, sir?

[1] *Jāmbunadena racitaḥ pulako yathaiva.*

Chamberlain. Lightning-tongue, go and bring a likeness of the heads of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa by order of the king.

Lightning-tongue. As the king commands. [*Exit.*]

Chamberlain. Well, I will go and attend on the king. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Sītā attended by a crowd of she-devils.*]

Sītā. My heart was thrilled at the coming of my lord. Why does it seem troubled to-day? Bad omens have appeared. Even so, I am greatly elated. May the gods grant that all is well.

[*Enter Rāvaṇa.*]

Rāvaṇa. Nay, do not go.

> This lady with a pure fresh lotus in her hand would go forth and leave my abode for ever. Yet I captured her, when in a trice I defeated Kubera in battle and Laṅkā came into my possession. (4)

Stay, lady, stay.[1] I pray you do not go. What do you say? You will leave me and go to Rāma? Well, be off with you.

> I seized thee by force erstwhile in Kubera's house. By force will I seize thee again, slaying Rāma in the fight. (5)

Let her go. Still I'll try to beguile Sītā.

[*Assuming a love-sick manner.*] Ah, none so powerful as the Lord of the Flowery Bow. For,

> Beholding Sītā's face, my eyes forget to sleep all night. Yearning for the joy of her embraces my form grows pale and wasted. With his flower-shaft he fixes torment on a lovely target. Alack, poor Rāvaṇa, whose arms subdued the triple world, is now subdued himself. (6)

[*Coming nearer.*]

> Sītā, with eyes like lotus leaves, mistress of my heart, give up thy heart set on a mortal man. In the battle-field to-day thou shall see thy heart's beloved, with Lakshmaṇa as well, being slaughtered by my weapon. (7)

Sītā. Oh, what a silly little Rāvaṇa it is, wanting to balance Mount Mandara in his hand.

[*Enter a Demon.*]

Demon. Victory to the king.

> Here are the two heads of those two human princes, slain by our prince in battle, and brought here for your pleasure. (8)

[1] He appears to be addressing a personification of his Fortune; compare *The Adventures of the Boy Kṛishṇa*.

Rāvaṇa. See, Sītā, see the heads of these two mortals.

Sītā. Alas! my noble lord. [*Falls down in a faint.*]

Rāvaṇa. Abandon thy affection, Sītā, for this man whose life has fled. This very day, O large-eyed lady, thou mayest gain great fortune. (9)

Sītā. [*Coming to herself.*] Alas, my lord, I am too cold-hearted, wretched me, gazing on your face, like a lotus fresh and fragrant, with your eyes so changed. Alack, dear lord, where have you gone, casting me in this sea of troubles? Yet I do not die. Can it be false? Good sir, with the very sword with which you wrought this dreadful deed upon my lord put me too to death.

Rāvaṇa. 'Tis clear. Indrajit has killed the wretched man in battle as well as Lakshmaṇa his brother. Who now will set thee free? (10)

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Rāma, Rāma—

Sītā. Long life to you—

[*Enter a Demon.*]

Demon. [*Excited.*] Rāma, Rāma—

Rāvaṇa. What do you mean by 'Rāma, Rāma—'?

Demon. Pardon, Majesty. In my hurry to report most urgent news I did not notice you were otherwise engaged.[1]

Rāvaṇa. Speak out, fellow. What has the ascetic mortal done?

Demon. Deign to listen, Majesty,

With his high courage and mighty strength Rāghava, with Lakshmaṇa, to-day has humiliated thee, the Lord of Laṅkā; swiftly winning the battle, he has slain thy son. (11)

Rāvaṇa. Ah, wretched coward.

Is Indrajit, who vanquished Indra and the gods with all the demons facing him, slain in battle by a man? (12)

Demon. Pardon, Majesty. In your Majesty's presence none dare tell a lie about the prince.

Rāvaṇa. Alas, my darling Meghanāda. [*Falls down in a swoon.*]

Demon. Take heart, your Majesty, take heart.

Rāvaṇa. [*Coming to himself.*]

Alas, my child, so skilled in arms, a torment to all the worlds. Alas, my child, that conquered Indra—encircled by submissive foes. Alas, my child, so loving to thy parents—a hero devoted to battle. Alas, my child, why hast thou gone and left me here? (13)

[1] *Lit.* 'the altered situation'.

[*Faints away.*]

Demon. Alack, 'tis cursed fate has brought the Lord of Laṅkā to this state, after conquering the three worlds. Majesty, take heart.

Rāvaṇa. [*Coming to himself.*] What good now is Sītā, the cause of this misfortune? What good this fickle Fortune who brings to naught the conquest of the universe. What then, thou cursed Fate? Art thou still tremulous with fear?

> Now devoid of all affection, now darling Indrajit has gone,
> this hard-hearted Ten-heads, O misery, is still alive. (14)

[*Falls down overcome with grief.*]

Demon. Ho, there, goblin warriors—the king is in a bad way. So you guards on the inner rampart must be careful.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Ho, there, you goblin warriors, are you timidly turning your backs in fear, because the ocean of the army is somewhat lessened by the deaths of Longhand, Nikumbha, Pot-ear, and Indrajit in the van? Time and again you have won battles against the gods. This timorous flight is disgraceful. And, mind you, our master the Lord of Laṅkā is still here, adorned with twenty arms, and famed for his conquest of the universe.

Rāvaṇa. [*Listening. Angrily.*] Go, and get the latest news.

Demon. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Greeting, Majesty.

This Rāma,

> Surrounded by troops of monkeys, his large eyes full of laughter, comes with an arrow fitted to his bow, ignoring thee in his arrogance, and having slain thy son in the forefront of the battle, is rushing on Laṅkā as if he would set it ablaze. (15)

Rāvaṇa. [*Getting up suddenly in a rage.*] Where is he? Where is he? [*Draws his sword.*]

> This sword I hold in my hand has its edge hardened by cleaving the temples of Indra's elephants. 'Twill make thee a present to my wrath. Let the gods protect thee now. Whither art thou going, little creature? Stay, thou wicked ascetic, wait for me. (16)

Demon. Oh, sire, do not be rash.

Sītā. Rāvaṇa does horrid wicked things without any reason. But now he'll soon be dead.

Rāvaṇa. On account of her, so many of my brothers, sons, and friends have been killed. So I shall cut out her heart, the home of enmity,

pull out her entrails and tie them round my neck. Then with a blow of my lightning sword I shall kill the monkey troops and the pair of humans also.

Demon. Pardon, Majesty. The present is no time for endless futile efforts to match the arrogance of the enemy's force. And it's certainly no good killing a woman.

Rāvaṇa. Well, send for my chariot.

Demon. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Victory to your Majesty. Here is the chariot.

Rāvaṇa. [*Mounting the chariot.*]

Sītā, to-day shalt thou see Rāma, with the gods around him,
bewildered[1] by the sharp arrows streaming from my bow. (17)

[*Exit Rāvaṇa with his train.*]

Sītā. Ye gods, as surely as I am loyal to my lord, as beseems the traditions of our house, so surely may he gain the victory.

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

ACT VI

INTERLUDE

[*Enter three Fairies.*[2]]

All Three. Here we are, here we are.

First Fairy. Rāma is the standard of the Ikshvāku house, large and blazing bright.

Second Fairy. He girds his loins to slaughter Rāvaṇa.

Third Fairy. Our hearts are all agog with eagerness to view their combat.

All Three. So we have swiftly come from the peaks of the Himalayas. (1)

First Fairy. Citraratha, all the sky is crowded with gods, divine sages, saints, and fairies. So let us avoid those groups and take our stand on any vacant spot to see the wonderful duel between Rāma and Rāvaṇa.

Two Fairies. Very well.

[*They do so.*]

First Fairy. Ah, this battle-field is an appalling sight.

This battle-field is like an ocean with floods of goblin corpses,

[1] *ākrānta-cetasam*, 'his wits beset', but Sarup takes *cetas* to be the physical heart, translating, 'his heart shot'.

[2] Vidyādharas. See note, p. 88.

where mighty monkeys form the waves, sharp swords the crocodiles, where the tide surges with the ray-like arrows of the moon-like Rāma. (2)

Second Fairy. 'Tis so indeed—

These demon troops fall in the battle, heads battered with trees and rocks, hammered by blows of fists. They are hemmed in by mighty monkey captains, in a fury, with tails and ears all erect. With fierce faces and bitten lips, with eyes goggling wide as they are strangled, the demons swiftly fall like mountains struck by thunderbolts. (3)

Third Fairy. And mark you these,

With sharp and shining swords, eyes with ire distended, with hideous white teeth, they look like dark blue clouds. Eager to kill all the leaders of the monkey host, these demons are charging on, their mouths gaping with the speed. (4)

First Fairy. Oh, now again.

The demons are raining arrows on the apes.

Second Fairy. The apes are hurling rocks upon the demons.

Third Fairy. With hefty blows of fists and knees,

They have started smashing each other in a strange and dreadful scrimmage. (5)

First Fairy. Look at Rāvaṇa.

Whirling a spear with a golden shaft, with hideous white teeth, he drives his chariot. When he sees Rāma, enraged, he is like a planet that beholds the full-orbed moon, lord of stars, on a peak of the eastern mountain. (6)

Second Fairy. See Rāma too.

In his left hand holding the bow, and drawing a goodly arrow with his right, the hero stands on the ground and regards his foe in chariot, as the God of War in battle gazed at the mighty Krauñca mountain. (7)

Third Fairy. Ha, ha.

Rāvaṇa let fly his spear resembling Death. But Rāma the archer smiled and split it in two. (8)

First Fairy. Rāvaṇa sees his spear shot down, and with eyes dilated in wrath he rains a shower of arrows on Rāma. (9)

Second Fairy. Oh, how beautiful Rāma looks.

Showers of arrows from the cloud that is Rāvaṇa, sparkle on reaching Rāma like drops of water on a bull. (10)

Third Fairy. There he is,

Swiftly raising his keen golden bow, he throws out the dreadful

network of arrows in the van of battle. He advances on foot against Rāvaṇa mounted on a car, as a sharp-toothed tiger rushes on a raging elephant. (11)

All Three. Why, all this place is ablaze with light. What can it be?

First Fairy. Ah, Indra has become anxious because the battle is so even,[1] so he has sent his chariot driven by Mātali.

Second Fairy. Rāma sees Mātali beside him and at his request mounts the car.

Third Fairy. There he goes.

This chariot is the index of the chief god's pride in victory and the destroyer of Diti's devilish brood. Therein he shines as the cause of the demon's downfall, just as Śiva[2] shone aforetime at the massacre of three cities. (12)

First Fairy. Aha, a mighty fight 's toward.

The soldiers of the ape and demon armies have given over hurling divers weapons. They stand at ease to watch the fight 'twixt the Lord of men and the demon, wherein the goodly bolts drink up the sharpest arrows. (13)

Second Fairy. Oh, and now,

These two, wheeling round in military movements, stand in their cars emitting flights of arrows; like two suns wandering in the sky and burning up the earth with their netted rays. (14)

Third Fairy. Look at Rāvaṇa.

With darts of dreadful speed he has slain the steeds. In a trice he furiously attacks the standard. Roaring, he discharges a mighty shower of arrows, trying to frighten the lord of men, who only laughs. (15)

First Fairy. Here is Rāma.

Taking breath a moment, his body is dwarfed as he takes his stance, glancing at a sharp arrow with eyes as red as the noonday sun. Mātali gives him a clear space, and the heroic lord of men angrily aims the weapon of unmeasured power, his grandsire's[3] gift. (16)

Second Fairy. This weapon,

Discharged by the force of Rāma's arm, its sharp edge reflecting the burning sun, smites down the goblin chief and swiftly returns to Rāma. (17)[4]

[1] Reading with Editor *ā yuddha-sāmānya-*. Sarup would read *āyuddhāsāmānya-* 'because the fighting is uneven', i. e. because Rāma is on foot and his opponent in a chariot.

[2] Kapardin with hair wound in the form of a cowrie.

[3] Brahma.

[4] Like a boomerang.

All Three. Ah, Rāvaṇa has fallen.

First Fairy. Beholding Rāvaṇa slain the gods have sent a shower of flowers, and their kettle-drums are roaring loudly. **(18)**

Second Fairy. Well, the gods' task is accomplished.

First Fairy. Come along, then. Let us also honour Rāma, the universal benefactor.

Two Fairies. Yes, an excellent proposal.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

[END OF THE INTERLUDE.]

[*Enter Rāma.*]

Rāma. Rāvaṇa I killed to-day in battle swiftly beset by the speed of my shafts.

Vibhīshaṇa, the noble-minded, I have now made lord of Laṅkā.
Thus, having swum across an ocean of vows, where mighty beings roam,[1] I make my way to Laṅkā with my kinsmen to comfort Sītā. **(19)**

[*Enter Lakshmaṇa.*]

Lakshmaṇa. Greeting, noble brother. Your noble consort is approaching, sir.

Rāma. My dear Lakshmaṇa.

By reason of Sītā's misfortune, and at the sight of her that has dwelt in my enemy's halls, my anger will now prevent my patience. **(20)**

Lakshmaṇa. As my noble brother bids. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Vibhīshaṇa.*]

Vibhīshaṇa. Greeting, prince!

Here comes thy faithful wife, O king, her misery removed by thy strength of arm. By thy favour she has come, like the goddess of Prosperity erstwhile released from the demon house. **(21)**

Rāma. Let her wait there, Vibhīshaṇa. She is sullied by contact with the demon, and has become a stain on Ikshvāku's house. As king Daśaratha was my father, it is not meet that she should see me, Lord of Laṅkā. Besides,

Who stays a man from sinking in unworthy objects of the senses, he is a friend, O king; if he does not, he is a foe. **(22)**

Vibhīshaṇa. But pardon, prince—

[1] That is of the ocean—inhabited by great sea-monsters, of vows—kept by the great. A tasteless verse that does not fit in with what follows.

Rāma. Pray do not vex me further.

[*Enter Lakshmaṇa.*]

Lakshmaṇa. Greeting, noble brother! Learning of your intention, your wife awaits your permission to mount the funeral pyre.

Rāma. Lakshmaṇa, accede to the wish of this pious lady.

Lakshmaṇa. As my noble brother bids. [*Stepping round.*] Alas!

Convinced of the princess's chastity and hearing of my brother's command, my heart is swung betwixt duty and affection. (23)

Who's there?

[*Enter Hanumān.*]

Hanumān. Greeting, prince!

Lakshmaṇa. If you are capable of doing it, Hanumān, such is my brother's order.

Hanumān. But what does your highness think about it?

Lakshmaṇa. What I think is of no consequence. Nay, we have but to carry out my brother's purpose. Let us go.

Hanumān. As your highness bids. [*Exeunt ambo.*]

[*Enter Lakshmaṇa.*]

Lakshmaṇa. If you please, my brother, oh, a miracle. For the noble lady,

Like a wreath of full-blown lotus, giving up all hopes of life, is swiftly entering the fire, making all thy labour fruitless, as a swan enters a field of lilies. (24)

Rāma. Marvellous. Oh, prevent her, Lakshmaṇa.

Lakshmaṇa. As my brother bids.

[*Enter Hanumān.*]

Hanumān. Greeting, my lord,

This pure lady in the purifying fire has received no injury, but like a golden necklace has come from the flames with added lustre. (25)

Rāma. [*Astonished.*] Oh, what is this?

Lakshmaṇa. Oh, a miracle!

[*Enter Sugrīva.*]

Sugrīva. Greeting, prince,

Who, pray, is this, born of the blazing fire in a worshipful form, that brings Janaka's daughter alive? (26)

Lakshmaṇa. Ah, this is the holy God of Fire that comes hither leading the noble lady.

Rāma. Yea, it is the blessed God of Fire. Let us go to meet him.

[*They all do so.*]

[*Enter Agni leading Sītā.*]

Agni. Here is the blessed Nārāyaṇa. Greeting, my lord.

Rāma. Blessed one, I salute you.

Agni. The lord of the gods should not salute me.

Lord of kings and best of men take this lady, Janaka's daughter. She is sinless, pure, unscathed, and honoured of all the world. (27)

Besides, Know thou that this child of Janaka is the blessed Lakshmī, come to thee in human form. (28)

Rāma. I thank you.

Well, I knew Vaidehī's purity, oh God of the Smoky Banner.
Yet I acted thus to bring conviction to the world. (29)

[*Celestial musicians sing behind the scene.*]

Salutations to Nārāyaṇa, cause of the triple world.

Brahmā is thy heart, Lord of the Triple World, Rudra is thy wrath. The Sun and Moon are thy two eyes, Lord of Gods, and Eloquence[1] thy tongue. All three worlds with Brahmā, Indra, and the Marut hosts are created by thee alone, oh Lord. Sītā here is She that loves her lotus home,[2] thou art Vishṇu, so do thou receive her. (30)

[*Again, other voices sing behind the scenes.*]

When this earth had sunk in the briny deep, thou alone didst raise it in the body of a boar. With thy three strides, oh Lord of Gods, thou didst encompass all three worlds. Of thine own accord thou and thy queen have taken on these forms. Slaying Rāvaṇa in battle thou hast now made the gods feel secure as they never did before. (31)

Agni. Blessed sir, these hosts of gods, divine sages, saints, fairies, celestial nymphs, and musicians, congratulate you, all according to their powers.

Rāma. I thank them.

Agni. Come hither, blessed sir, for your consecration.

Rāma. As your holiness commands.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

[*Voices behind the scene.*]

Victory to the King. Victory to our Lord. Victory to the Blessed One. Victory to his Majesty. Victory to the destroyer of Rāvaṇa. Long live the King.

[1] Bhāratī, goddess of speech.

[2] Lakshmī, called Kamalālayā, the wife of Vishṇu from whose navel the lotus springs. 'Devoted to him whose abode is on the lotus', i.e. to Brahmā, would be impossible mythology.

Vibhīshaṇa. Here is the King.

Crossing the ocean of his vows and winning the queen to-day in battle, free from sin, he is crowned to-day by all the gods and shines like the moon in a clear sky. (**32**)

Lakshmaṇa. Ah, one sees divinity in his Majesty.

Surrounded by Yama, Varuṇa, Kubera, Vāsava, and hosts of other gods, and consecrated by the command of Daśaratha he is as glorious as Indra, when he gained the lordship of the gods. (**33**)

[*Enter Rāma, consecrated, with Sītā.*]

Rāma. Dear Lakshmaṇa,

When the king had placed me on the sacred throne, and the lucky cord was on my arm, he broke off the consecration, intent to please my mother. 'Tis clear that though he now has gone the way of fate, my father has crowned me once again to-day with a happy heart. (**34**)

Agni. Blessed sir, here come your subjects to meet you, led by Bharata and Śatrughna, at the injunction of Mahendra.

Rāma. Blessed One, I rejoice.

Agni. Mahendra here, and the other nectar-loving gods congratulate you.

Rāma. I thank them.

Agni. Blessed sir, what further favour can I bestow on you?

Rāma. If the blessed one is pleased with me, what further favour can I desire?

EPILOGUE.

May the kine be without blemish and, subduing the sovereignty of his foes, may our Lion King rule over this earth in its entirety.[1]

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

[1] Identical with the Epilogue of *The Minister's Vows*.

SELECT INDEX

I and II refer to Volumes, other numbers to pages.

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